

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 critical thinking.

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

VRHS Academic Expectations:

Students will comprehend written language
Students will speak effectively

Books are available at VRHS, local libraries and bookstores or from online sellers. Some are available in paperback, audio or e-book form, sometimes on Kindle unlimited for free.

2019 Faculty and Student Committee

Abby Amara
Grace Amato
Leah Bargnesi
Emi Bisson
Anne Brenneman

Teresa Cobb
Carolyn Crehan
Ava Cunningham
Tabby Hardgrove
Erin LoMonaco
Jenna LoMonaco

Sophia Malli
Sarah McKinney
Matthew Skowronek
Kristie Schmidt
Paige Stegina

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.

Dear Parent or Guardian:

From suggestions of over 75 books from teachers and students, the committee selects those encompassing multiple points of view, different cultures, time periods, and a myriad of experiences with a wide range of appeal.

This booklet explains in detail the summer reading process. Summer reading will take place on the second and third days of the first week of school in CORE. Students are required to choose one book from the required book list. The required book list is intended to challenge your student to go beyond their preferred genre, favorite authors, and preferred subject matter to discover something new.

The project choices for the one required book are explained in detail in this booklet and will be completed on the second day of school in CORE.

Students who do not complete the requirements on the second and third day of school will be assigned to a flex location with their CORE teacher for completion the first full week of school. After progress reports, if a student has still not completed the work, the student will be assigned 3 hour detentions until completed. Students who transfer into Valley within two weeks of the start of school are typically exempt from that year's requirements.

Books are available for previewing in the VRHS library and at local libraries. Essex Library will offer a session on Monday, July 29th at 4 p.m. Join them in front of the big screen for a showing of this year's required TED Talks and pizza, refreshments, prizes, and a selection of summer reading books available to take home. Stick around for a bit of discussion and walk away with notes to help with the on-demand writing assignment in September. Registration is required for this event. Please reserve a seat by calling 860-767-1560 or emailing Jessica at jbranciforte@essexlib.org.

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

Sincerely,

Michael Barile
Principal

Kristie Schmidt
Library Media Specialist
Coordinator, Summer Reading Committee

Summer Reading Instructions for Required Book

1. Preview your book at the VRHS library. Read the online summer reading booklet, including the reviews of each book, before making your decision. Check out a book before school ends for the summer.
2. Choose one book for your level from the Required book list. Your level is the English class you will be in for the 2019-2020 school year. If you will be in a level 2 English class, you should choose a level 2 book or one labeled both. 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 book but you may read one labeled both.
3. Read the Written Response and Oral Discussion rubrics to understand how you will be assessed.
4. Over the summer review the list of required TED talk project choices and prompts. View the talk of your choice. **(If the talk does not have a prompt that will work for your book, you should choose another talk to view).**
5. You may prepare notes or an outline to bring on the second day of school and to use for your written response which will take place in CORE. You may not write the response before CORE on the second day of school.

Instructions for Required Book TED Talk Projects

1. Choose one of the TED talks to watch before you return to school. Watch the talk close to the start of school (or attend the Essex Library showing), take notes related to the prompt you choose, and possibly watch more than once so it is fresh in your mind.
2. During your first Summer Reading CORE day, you will respond in writing, **double spaced Times New Roman font size 12 (MLA style)**, in 1-2 pages to one prompt specific to the talk you watched, of your choice. **(If a prompt does not work for your book, choose a different TED talk to view.) Bring headphones.**
3. Your response must include details from both your book **and** the TED talk as evidence of your reading and viewing. **Although there is no formal Noodletools MLA Works Cited required, your response should refer to the sources, the book content and author or TED speaker and TED talk. For example: “According to Janet Edwards, the author of *Earth Girl . . .*” or “As Burnett states in his TED talk, “. . .”.**
4. You will turn your response in to your CORE teacher at the end of the first Summer Reading CORE block. (Only students with specific IEP or 504 accommodations for extra time will be given extra time if needed.)

TED Talk Choices (choose one that works with your book choice)

“We All Bleed Red” by Colleen Kelly Alexander (14:12)

<https://www.colleenkellyalexander.com/single-post/2019/01/07/TEDx-We-all-Bleed-Red>

Prompt Choices (choose one)

1. Archbishop Desmond Tutu reacts to Colleen Kelly Alexander by saying, “I am your grandfather...” What does Tutu mean and how is Ubuntu expressed in your book?
2. How does Colleen Kelly Alexander define psychological first aid? How is psychological first aid offered throughout your book, including from the author?

“The Case for Curiosity Driven Research” by Suzie Sheehy (9:20)

https://www.ted.com/talks/suzie_sheehy_the_case_for_curiosity_driven_research

Prompt Choices (choose one):

1. Like curiosity driven research, a book may initially seem pointless. Describe the experiment Sheehy uses and discuss how your book led you to think about something unexpected.
2. Apply the Swift quote Sheehy shares to the book you read.
3. Apply the Thompson quote Sheehy shares to the book you read. What unexpected plot outcomes change your view of reality?

“What to Trust in a Post-Truth World” by Alex Edmands (17:48)

https://www.ted.com/talks/alex_edmands_what_to_trust_in_a_post_truth_world

Prompt Choices (choose one):

1. In what ways does your book present confirmation bias? How is confirmation bias challenged in your book?
2. Apply the Thomas Edison quote. In what ways do characters or people in your book test Edison’s statement?
3. Edmands sets out many criteria. In what ways can fiction move us toward the pro-truth world Edmands describes?

Summer Reading Written Response Rubric

Criteria	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Does Not Meet Passing Standard
Elaboration of Evidence	Response provides thorough and convincing evidence that supports the writer's claims/conclusions from both the required book and TED talk	Response provides adequate evidence that supports the writer's claims/conclusions from both the required book and TED talk	Response provides sparse evidence that supports the writer's claims/conclusions from both the required book and TED talk	Response does not provide evidence from either the required book or TED talk
Response Quality and Organization	Response is accurate, clearly stated, focused and well-developed; has a clear and effective organizational structure	Response is accurate, generally focused and developed; has an obvious organizational structure	Response is generally accurate, but may have issues with clarity or organization	Response is inaccurate, unclear, unfocused and inadequately developed; unorganized; lacks structure
Conventions: Grammar including punctuation and capital letter conventions; appropriate vocabulary and spelling; MLA format (Times New Roman, size 12, double spaced paragraphs)	Response correctly uses: Complete sentences Capitalization Punctuation Spelling Grade-level vocabulary; appropriate for the audience and purpose; virtually error free; (formal Works Cited not required but refers in writing to book and TED talk)	Response has minor mistakes in the following conventions: Complete sentences Capitalization Punctuation Spelling Grade-level vocabulary; appropriate for the audience and purpose; (formal Works Cited not required but refers in writing to book and TED talk)	Response has several mistakes in the following conventions: Complete sentences Capitalization Punctuation Spelling Grade-level vocabulary; appropriate for the audience and purpose; (formal Works Cited not required but refers in writing to book and TED talk)	Response has multiple mistakes in the following conventions: Complete sentences Capitalization Punctuation Spelling Grade-level vocabulary; inappropriate for the audience and purpose; does not refer in writing to book and TED talk

To pass written response, students must meet Satisfactory or above criteria for Elaboration of Evidence and one other criteria category.

Students must pass both the Summer Reading Written assignment and the Oral Discussion components to receive graduation credit.

Instructions for Discussion in CORE on Day 2

1. Be ready to respond to the following prompt orally in group discussion on Summer Reading CORE Day 2:

Prompt: Using evidence from the required book, the choice TED talk, and the ideas you wrote during the written response in CORE, discuss.

2. Review the Summer Reading Oral Discussion Rubric to see how you will be evaluated. *This is an interactive discussion, not a singular report so expect to respond to what other students say, interact verbally with other students, and ask questions or make comments not just based on what you pre-prepare.*
3. All students will attend discussion in CORE on Day 2. *Desks/chairs will be put into a circle so all students can make eye contact with other students and the CORE teacher.* Students with 504 or IEP accommodations indicating so may discuss in flex with their CORE teacher or case manager before the 7th day of school ends but will attend the whole group CORE discussion unless the IEP, 504 plan or case manager direct otherwise.

Summer Reading Oral Discussion Rubric

Criteria	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Does Not Meet Passing Standard
Reference to Texts (required book and TED talk)	Repeatedly cites texts to support, expand or refute points of discussion; demonstrates deep and comprehensive understanding of both book and TED talk	Cites texts a few times to support, expand or refute points; demonstrates comprehensive understanding of both book and TED talk	Paraphrases texts or only parrots what others have said; demonstrates limited understanding of both book and TED talk	Does not refer to texts or make connections between them; does not demonstrate knowledge of either book or TED talk
Participation Level (students with an IEP or 504 plan may have accommodations but should still be present for CORE discussion)	Active participant who clarifies, asks questions, provides explanations, makes connections to what other students say; exhibits self-awareness and does not dominate	Active participant who clarifies, asks questions, provides explanations, makes some connections to what other students say; may dominate	Minimally contributes; responds only to direct questions; doesn't initiate or respond to others; doesn't make connections to what other students say	Fails to contribute
Body Language and Eye Contact	Facial expression and body language convey strong enthusiasm and interest; eye contact with other students virtually all the time	Facial expression/body language sometimes convey strong enthusiasm and interest; eye contact with other students less than 75% of the time	Facial expression and body language seem contrived; eye contact with other students less than 50% of the time	Apparent disinterest; little or no eye contact with other students (looks away or down at desk or only at teacher)
Use of Language	Language appropriate to audience and academic task with rare vocalized pauses (um, uh, er, like, etc.)	Language appropriate to audience and academic task with a few vocalized pauses (um, uh, er, like, etc.)	Language appropriate to audience and academic task with many vocalized pauses (um, uh, er, like)	Language inappropriate for the audience and task; plentiful pauses (um, uh, er, like, etc.) create confusion and lack of coherence
Pacing and Clarity	Speaks neither too quickly nor too slowly; speaks clearly and distinctly all the time; no mispronounced words; volume is appropriate	Speaks either slightly too quickly or too slowly; speaks clearly and distinctly nearly all the time; no more than one mispronounced word; volume is mostly appropriate	Speaks either too quickly or too slowly; speaks clearly and distinctly most of the time; no more than one mispronounced word; speaks too quietly or loudly	Tempo of speech is inappropriate; often mumbles or cannot be understood; more than one mispronounced word; speaks too quietly or loudly

To pass oral discussion, students must meet Satisfactory or above criteria for Reference to Texts and Participation and two other criteria categories.

Students must pass both the Summer Reading Written assignment and the Oral Discussion components to receive graduation credit.

VRHS Required Book for TED Talk Project

Title	Author	Genre	Level
<i>All American Boys</i>	Brendan Kiely and Jason Reynolds	F	both
<i>Americanized: Rebel Without a Green Card</i>	Sara Saedi	NF	both
<i>Between Shades of Grey</i>	Ruth Sepetys	F	2
<i>Brave New World</i>	Aldous Huxley	F	1
<i>The Bunker Diary</i>	Kevin Brooks	F	2
<i>Children of Blood and Bone</i>	Tomi Adeyemi	F	both
<i>Daring Greatly: How the Courage to be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead</i>	Brene Brown	NF	both
<i>Dear Martin</i>	Nic Stone	F	2
<i>Devil's Within</i>	S.F. Henson	F	both
<i>Disappeared</i>	Francisco Stork	F	both
<i>Dorothy Must Die</i>	Danielle Paige	F	both
<i>Dry</i>	Neal Shusterman	F	both
<i>Educated</i>	Tara Westover	NF	1
<i>The False Prince</i>	Jennifer Nielsen	F	2
<i>The Forgotten 500</i>	Gregory Freeman	NF	both
<i>The Hazel Wood</i>	Melissa Albert	F	both
<i>Here to Stay</i>	Sara Farizan	F	2
<i>Highly Illogical Behavior</i>	John Whaley	F	both
<i>Leah on the Offbeat</i>	Becky Albertalli	F	2
<i>Midnight at the Electric</i>	Jodi Lynn Anderson	F	2
<i>Mr. 60%</i>	Clete Barrett Smith	F	2
<i>Nine Pints: A Journey Through the Money,</i>	Rose George	NF	1

<i>Medicine, and Mysteries of Blood</i>			
<i>No Summit Out of Sight</i>	Jordan Romero	NF	both
<i>The Poet X</i>	Elizabeth Acevedo	F	2
<i>Saints and Misfits</i>	S.K. Alli	F	2
<i>The Sight</i>	David Clement-Davies	F	1
<i>The Stranger in the Woods</i>	Michael Finkel	NF	both
<i>The Sun Does Shine</i>	Anthony Ray Hinton	NF	both
<i>This is Our Story</i>	Ashley Elston	F	both
<i>The War Outside</i>	Monica Hesse	F	both
<i>Warcross</i>	Marie Lu	F	both
<i>When We Collided</i>	A.L. Jackson	F	both
<i>A Whole New Mind</i>	Daniel Pink	NF	both
<i>Women in Science: 50 Fearless Pioneers Who Changed the World</i>	Rachel Ignotofsky	NF	both

2019 VRHS Summer Reading List Reviews

***Read on to see what book Mr. Perreault, Mr. Richards, and Mrs. Montenegro have connections to**

***All American Boys* by Brendan Kiely and Jason Reynolds**

If you're looking for a realistic fiction book that you can't put down, *All American Boys* is the choice for you. The two main characters switch narration throughout the book--Rashad, an African American ROTC student, tells his story of the brutal police violence he experienced because of a misunderstanding in a convenience store, and Quinn, Rashad's classmate, witnesses the entire scene leaving him questioning the police brutality he witnesses. Further, the police officer involved in the beating, a well respected son of an Iraqi War vet, is a close family friend of Quinn's. Quinn struggles with ethical questions. Should he tell what he saw? Or, should he remain silent? This is a story that could be seen on the nightly news, and this book alludes to some of the racial and social problems we are experiencing in our country. You won't be disappointed if you choose to read *All American Boys*.

***Americanized: Rebel Without a Green Card* by Sara Saedi**

Immigration is a hot topic in the nation and Sara Saedi's memoir, targeted to a young adult audience, offers a funny and refreshing take on what it means to be a non-citizen in the United States. This book is perfect for students interested in culture, current events, and humor. Born in Iran during the Islamic Revolution, Saedi and her family take refuge in a move to

southern California when she is just two years old. It is not until she is a teenager that Saedi discovers she is actually undocumented and that her whole life as she knows it is technically illegal. This memoir not only takes into account the process through which Saedi must go through to obtain a green card, but is peppered with all of the other issues that arise for teenagers such as learning to drive and figuring out a date for the prom. *Americanized* is currently in development as a potential television series through Reese Witherspoon's production company and has received many accolades in the publishing world. It is a fast paced read that educates and entertains. Great read for those in the IB Diploma Programme, those taking IB Global Politics or Contemporary Issues, and students interested in international relations or public policy and law related careers.

***Between Shades of Gray* by Ruth Sepeteys**

Lina is just like any other fifteen-year-old Lithuanian girl in 1941 who has an artistic soul. But one night when Soviet officers barge into her home, they tear her family from the comfortable life they've known. Separated from her father, forced onto a crowded and dirty train car, Lina, her mother, and her young brother slowly make their way north, crossing the Arctic Circle, to a work camp in the coldest reaches of Siberia. Here they are forced, under Stalin's orders, to dig for beets and fight for their lives under the cruelest of conditions. Lina documents her life events by drawing, hoping these messages will make their way to her father's prison camp to let him know they are still alive. It is a long and harrowing journey, spanning years and covering 6,500 miles, but it is through incredible strength, love, and hope that Lina ultimately survives. For fans of WWII books, also a great read for those who like history and art, those in the IB Diploma Programme, those taking IB Global Politics or Global Studies.

***Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley**

Brave New World presents readers with an interesting take on life in a world of mixed dystopian and utopian aspects. The characters are set in the World State where advanced technology is used to expand and maximize happiness. People are grown in bottles and brainwashed as children. Not meeting the expectations of the World State, John and Bernard Marx have a hard time enjoying life in Britain in the year 2450. Bernard, eight inches shorter than the "ideal human", wants to fit in and be accepted. John, however, grew up outside of the World State, where no technologies have been introduced, making him a complete outsider. He believes the purpose of life is not to be happy but to seek truth. Both John and Bernard have complete and utterly shocking fates moving the story along, making the book impossible to put down. Great read for those in the IB Diploma Programme, those taking IB Global Politics or Contemporary Issues, those interested in government, public policy, political careers, and psychology.

***The Bunker Diary* by Kevin Brooks**

Ever wonder what it would feel like to run away and leave your problems in the dust? After reading this 2014 Carnegie Medal Winner, you may want to rethink that. Linus Weens lives on the streets of London. When confronted by a "blind man", his innocence ends up stranding the boy in a low-ceilinged underground bunker. The man upstairs watches, listens, and controls every thought and action of not only Weens, but a young girl and eventually others. With no reception, no contact with the outside world, and no escape, the victimized crew tries to survive under the harshest living conditions. Every word of Weens' diary strengthens the reader's connections with the character promoting a sense of concern, sympathy, and confusion. Although fictional, Brooks takes you deep into the lives of kidnapped victims. This mix between

Room and *Lord of the Flies* captivates with every sentence, leaving you puzzled yet intrigued. For those interested in psychology.

***Children of Blood and Bone* by Tomi Adeyemi**

“They killed my mother. They took our magic. They tried to bury us. Now we rise.” Enter a world where magic was once present, but now, under the orders of a ruthless king, magic was destroyed through the deaths of all maji adults. Zélie’s mother was among those killed, and she has never forgiven the king for what he took from her. But now she is faced with one last chance to bring back magic and defeat the monarchy. As Zélie struggles to do what is right, her heart and her newfound powers betray her. In a tale filled with mistrust, uncertainty, and giant lions, magic hangs in the balance. Will Zélie be able to restore magic to the world, or will she lose everything she is fighting for? This West African-inspired YA fantasy debut has already been optioned for the big screen by the production company behind *Love, Simon* and the *Maze Runner* movie adaptations, and includes a script adapted by David Magee (*Life of Pi*, *Mary Poppins Returns*). The sequel, *Children of Virtue and Vengeance*, is set to hit bookshelves June 4.

***Daring Greatly* by Dr. Brene Brown**

Dr. Brené Brown presents a new way of approaching our vulnerability, as not a weakness, but rather the path to courage, connections, and wholehearted living. Based off of twelve years of research, *Daring Greatly* encourages readers to embrace their vulnerabilities and imperfections and to engage more fully into relationships, hearts, and lives. In the words of Teddy Roosevelt, “It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly;... who at best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly.” Check out Dr. Brown’s new Netflix series. For those interested in mental health, psychology, possible careers in health, education, psychology.

***Dear Martin* by Nic Stone**

Do you like reading something that you cannot put down? Are you craving a read that will leave you on the edge of your seat? If so, *Dear Martin* is the perfect book for you. Justyce McAllister is top of his class, captain of the debate team, and set for the Ivy League next year—but none of that matters to the police officer who just arrested him. Despite leaving his rough neighborhood, he can’t seem to escape the scorn of his former peers or the attitude of his prep school classmates. The only exception: Sarah Jane, Justyce’s gorgeous white debate partner he wishes he didn’t have a thing for. Struggling to cope with it all, Justyce starts a journal to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. but isn’t sure his ideas hold up in the modern world. Then comes the day Justyce goes driving with his best friend, windows rolled down, music turned up. Before they both know it, all hell breaks loose. Words fly and shots are fired. Soon Justyce gets caught in the crosshairs. For anyone who loved *The Hate U Give*.

***Devil’s Within* by S.F. Henson:**

This fast-paced book keeps you on the edge of your seat the entire time as twists and turns surprise you on every page in this unimaginable, but realistic world. The main character, a teenage boy named Nate, is the son of the leader of a deep south white supremacy group called The Fort. Nate has grown up in a culture of constant violence, abuse, and danger. Upon the death of his father, he is placed in the care of an uncle he never even knew existed and is forced to set the stories his father spun for him at the Fort against reality. He struggles with breaking his

aggressive nature, adapting to his new life, and coming to terms with his closed-off uncle. As his past reappears in his new life, he is forced to face the truth. This book gives you an entirely different perspective and you will end up rooting for Nate, despite his horrific past. If you are shocked and angered by the rise in recent white supremacy in the US, this book is a must read for you.

***Disappeared* by Francisco Stork**

If you like intense action, this book is right for you! *Disappeared* takes place in a span of four days, following the lives of Sara and her brother, Emiliano. Four months ago, Sara's best friend disappeared, and she has spent those last months writing an article every week about another girl who has gone missing. When a death threat is found in *El Sol's* emails that hints at Sara's friend's location, Sara realizes that continuing the search for her friend is dangerous. Does Sara continue searching for her best friend, or does she listen to the death threat and back down? At the same time, Emiliano falls in love with Perla Rubi, a girl way out of his league who comes from a very rich, powerful family. Her father offers him a business proposal--one that will change his life and those of the people around him. Will he accept the offer to be allowed to date Perla Rubi, or will he turn the offer down and give up the love of his life? Sara and Emiliano are taken on an action-packed, life-threatening adventure where they have to choose which path is right and which is wrong.

***Dorothy Must Die* by D.M. Paige**

Everyone knows how *The Wizard of Oz* ends--Dorothy clicks her heels three times and wakes up back in Kansas. But what happens next? After a tornado, Amy Gunn finds herself trapped in this Oz, one without the singing Munchkins, glowing Yellow Brick Road, or good witches. In this Oz, the line between good and evil isn't as clear as it used to be. She is recruited by the Revolutionary Order of the Wicked and given a task: remove the Tin Woodman's heart, steal the Scarecrow's brain, and take the Lion's courage. And then, Dorothy must die.

***Dry* by Neal Shusterman**

In this near future, the long drought in California has been nicknamed the Tap Out. Everyone is required to limit water use--no watering lawns, no long showers, no washing cars along with a long list of other don'ts. Then one day teenager Alyssa turns her tap water on and nothing comes out. Nothing. In its quest for water, Alyssa's otherwise typical suburban neighborhood turns into a war zone and her desperate parents take off to locate some, only they don't return. Left alone with her little brother, Alyssa must make harrowing decisions if they are to survive, decisions that may haunt her forever. This is an all too realistic look at a catastrophe that makes you think about what you would do in order to live, a cross between *Hunger Games* and *Survival*. For those interested in the environment, natural resources, the potential for global water conflict. A good read for those taking IB Global Politics or the IB Diploma Programme.

***Educated* by Tara Westover**

Westover writes a powerful memoir of her incredible journey to attain an education. Born to survivalist parents in rural Idaho, Westover recounts many stories of her unusual upbringing, unique and often traumatizing family situation, and the grit and resilience she had to maintain in order to pursue her passion for learning. From teaching herself math secretly at home to gaining admission to Brigham Young University and later studying at Cambridge University in the United Kingdom, Westover explores not only her pursuit of education, but what it means to develop an identity of one's own separate from her family's. *Educated* has been praised by *The New York Times*, Bill Gates, Oprah Winfrey, and has been nominated for several literary

awards. Westover's tale will stay with the reader for a long time and is ultimately a valentine to the importance of education as the means to opportunity and community. A perfect read for those headed to college, those in the IB Diploma Programme.

***The False Prince* by Jennifer Nielsen**

"Ruthless ambition, fierce action and plotting, complex characters and lots of sword play keep words flipping"--Kirkus Review. In a medieval setting, the country of Carthya, the death of the royal family sets into course a scheme that will forever change their future. The orphan, Sage, is in the middle of this scheme (but not at all willingly). He is forced into a competition for which death is the punishment if he cannot become the long lost prince of Carthya. *The False Prince* is filled with corruption, deception, and a witty main character, and readers are kept guessing until the very last page who is loyal, who is trustworthy, and who can become the false prince.

***The Forgotten 500* by Gregory Freeman**

"A sense of duty pursues us ever." Never before has this story been told of a daring World War II rescue mission. More than sixty years ago the OSS had to perform a daring recovery of more than 500 trapped airmen behind enemy lines in Nazi-occupied Yugoslavia. Classified for over half a century, Operation Halyard is this unforgettable story. These airmen were shot down during a bombing campaign over Romanian oil fields and had to rely on the help of locals, as well as each other, to survive. Freeman delivers a riveting account of an adventure story of heroes who went above and beyond, This book is filled with loyalty, self-sacrifice, and a lot of bravery. For history and adventure lovers.

***The Hazel Wood* by Melissa Albert**

Seventeen-year old Alice and her mother have always moved around a lot, always one step ahead of bad luck biting at their heels. But when Alice's grandmother, a reclusive author of dark fairy tales, dies alone at her estate, The Hazel Wood, everything changes. Alice's mother disappears, seemingly stolen by a figure from that supernatural fairy tale world. Allying with a classmate and a superfan, Alice must venture into the Hazel Wood to rescue her mother and perhaps discover why her own story went so wrong. A great read for those interested in fiction or creative writing.

***Here To Stay* by Sara Farizan**

Are you the type of person that likes to put yourself in others' shoes? Do you like sports and drama? *Here To Stay* is about a young, high school basketball star, Bijan Majidi. Bijan was always a very quiet person in school but when he makes the winning shot at a basketball championship game, his life changes. He transforms from a teenager flying under the radar to someone who walks down the halls with pride. Yet, suddenly, Bijan's life takes another turn, this time for the worse, when he starts to get cyberbullied. Bijan is Middle Eastern and some people make it really clear that they do not want him around. On the other hand, other people stand with him. This is a 'painfully honest, funny, athletic story about growing up, speaking out, and fighting prejudice'.

***Highly Illogical Behavior* by John Whaley**

Highly Illogical Behavior emphasizes the struggles of being a teenager: sexuality, social pressures, parental feuds, college stress, etc. Follow the life of 16 year old, Solomon Reed. The agoraphobic teen has not left the house in three years which has left him disconnected, yet content. When introduced to Lisa, a girl inspired by Reed's lifestyle, hoping to "fix" him and

obtain an interesting topic for her college essay, his outlook on life is completely changed. Whaley explores the ways in which we all hide from the world, and how love, tragedy, and the need for connection may be the only things to bring us back out. Perfect read for those interested in mental health, health education and careers related to psychology and wellness.

***Leah on the Offbeat* by Becky Albertalli**

Leah Burke is always on beat when it comes to drumming, however, her life is a different story. Leah feels like the world is out to get her--an outcast, only child to a single mom, struggling with her weight, but also having to work through her bisexuality alone. Along with not being able to show her true self to even her best friends, she has to face prom and college on the horizon. You will surely fall in love with this spunky, funny, quirky and described as “dark side of perfection” type of character.

***Midnight at the Electric* by Jodi Lynn Anderson**

“No one wants to disappear. Words pin things down and make them real, and they last so much longer than we do”--Adri. Adri is an orphan, a loner who doesn't like to get close to anyone. She has the chance to go to Mars to continue making the planet ready for human life. At the time, she doesn't think she has any family. But a few weeks before she is to leave Earth, Adri finds out she has an older cousin, and goes to live with her. While there, she discovers the journal of a girl who used to live in her cousin's house over a hundred years ago. The journal does not recount all of the girl's life so Adri is determined to learn the rest, but she is running out of time before her launch to Mars, never to return. Adri hurries to find the end to the girl's story in order to decide her own fate. An unusual mix of genres that works, holds your interests, and makes you think about how past, present, and future connect.

***Mr. 60%* by Clete Barrett Smith**

Everyone has heard “ Don't judge a book by it's cover,” only most people do. Everyone at school knows who Matt Nolan is: the kid who barely passes classes, a loner, and the school drug dealer. What everyone doesn't know is that Matt deals drugs in order to afford cancer drugs for his Uncle Jack, who he lives with after his mother abandoned him. When Matt is required to join a club after school in order to graduate, he reluctantly agrees knowing it's his last chance at a future. Then Matt meets Amanda, another outcast at school who is judged by her looks, and they form an unconventional friendship. Matt eventually introduces Amanda to Uncle Jack, and a bond is formed among all three. When the inevitable happens, the friendship is tested. Matt and Amanda realize they both need each other in order to push past the bad in order to pursue the good. This book covers many teen issues including ethical decisions, appearances, trust and grief.

***No Summit Out of Sight* by Jordan Romero**

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to climb to the top of Mount Everest, where the temperature even in summer never goes above freezing and the average cost per climb is \$30,000? Jordan Romero, from California, is the youngest person to ever climb to the summit, and did so at age 13. Then at 15, he climbed the tallest mountain on each of the seven continents, again the youngest person ever to do so. This is a quick and easy read and a surprisingly interesting non-fiction story as written by Jordan himself. "Romero's incredible, inspiring story may not inspire all readers to become record-setting mountaineers, but it will motivate them to set sights on goals of their own to achieve" says Kirkus Reviews. Perfect read for athletes and hikers.

***Nine Pints* by Rose George**

It's red — dark, dark red. It flows throughout every single one of our bodies all day, every day: it's blood. *Nine Pints* follows journalist Rose George's journey around the world exploring the uses and cultural aspects of blood, from how women on their periods are treated in Nepal to a leech farm in Wales. She details the intricacies regarding blood, its commerce, and new scientific discoveries by women in science fields which forever changed our medical treatments. But there is also a dark side to the blood story, the illegal plasma trade. In Canada George uncovers dark truths about buying and selling blood which often lead to many complications for everyone involved. It couldn't be said better than by Mary Roach, author of *Grunt*, "Rarely does one encounter such beautifully crafted prose in the service of nonfiction. Bloody hell, this is a good book." For those in AP or IB Biology, anyone interested in doctoring, nursing, EMT work, blood donations, etc.

***The Poet X* by Elizabeth Acevedo**

X has a unforgettable voice, but keeps her words to herself. Xiomara has grown up watching her brother succeed and feels she is a disappointment. As her mother and father are very religious and strict, X keeps her thoughts to herself. One day she meets a boy her age, the rules start to get broken and forgiveness isn't always guaranteed. However, when it comes to defending herself, her fists are up. Follow Xiomara as she finds her way and her voice through the tricky world.

***Saints and Misfits* by S.K. Ali**

She calls herself a misfit. With her entire life changing around her, Janna Yusuf doesn't feel like she fits in anywhere. But her real troubles start when Farooq—an esteemed member of the mosque Janna attends—attempts to sexually abuse her at a friend's party. Even though her friend's appearance stops Farooq before it can go any further, Janna struggles with comparing the saint Farooq pretends to be in the mosque with the monster she saw that night. As she tries to figure out what to do, her faith comes into question in multiple ways. How does Janna explain to her father that her decision to wear a hijab is her own, and not her mother's? Is it okay for a Muslim to date a non-Muslim? And how can Janna figure out what her religion means to her, amidst everyone else's views? Follow along as Janna discovers herself in a world of saints, misfits, and even monsters.

***The Sight* by David Clement-Davies**

"At times, the greatest courage of all is to live"--David Clement-Davies. From the author of *Fire Bringer* comes a story of survival, love, loss, hope, and sacrifice. Told completely through the perspective of wolves, this is a unique story that brings the reader on an unforgettable adventure. The pack has to rely on each other as they discover the mysteries of the Sight and the prophecy that surrounds them while attempting to avoid the curse that the evil Morgra put on their pack. They have to find themselves, what truly matters in life, and how far they will go to save the people they love.

***The Stranger in the Woods* by Michael Finkel**

The residents near Little Pond in central Maine have known for years that someone was stealing their stuff but not just any stuff--specifically, candy, classic books, cheap watches, coffee, tortellini and marshmallows. The burglar leaves no trace nor damage. Even vacationers in the area like Mr. Perreault and Mr. Richards had heard the rumors. Who was this mysterious

stranger raiding Pine Tree Camp and why was no one able to catch them in the act? Meet Chris Knight, a reclusive hermit who didn't speak to another human for 27 years. Read how Chris survived in the wilderness next to Little Pond, including severe Maine winters in which the temperature dipped 20 degrees below freezing. Mrs. Montenegro's book club devoured this fascinating, spellbinding read and like them, you will be left wondering about and fascinated by Chris Knight, the legal system's inadequacies in dealing with him, and how to respect an individualist who wants nothing to do with the world but has now been exposed to it.

***The Sun Does Shine* by Anthony Ray Hinton**

Can you imagine being convicted of multiple murders you never committed and then sentenced to death by electrocution? Can you imagine spending thirty years of your life in a tiny room wondering when the guards will show up to escort you to your death? Can you imagine hoping, praying that the truth will come out, that you will have a chance to prove your innocence? Can you imagine such hate, such prejudice? Anthony Ray Hinton's story is about all of this and his ability to cope with emotional and mental torture. Hinton teaches us about compassion and forgiveness and the resilience of the human spirit. For those interested in public policy and race, the law, governing, and criminal justice.

***This Is Our Story* by Ashley Elston**

"A ten-point buck and a dead body make the same sound when they hit the forest floor." One morning at River Point, five boys went hunting and only four came back. No one knows what happened and no one will say who fired the accidental shot that killed their friend. The problem: the evidence seems to show that it could have been any one of them. The River Point Boys are all anyone can talk about but the DA wants the case swept under the rug since he owes his political office to the boys' powerful families. Nothing is what it seems as prime suspects change and the evidence begins to show that it wasn't an accident at all. Who is the true killer but more importantly, why did they do it?

***The War Outside* by Monica Hesse**

"Of all the things that happened there, in that place full of enemies and dust and spies and sadness; of all the things Margot said to me--the calculations that sounded like friendship, the causal shattering of my life--out of all those things, I am grateful for only one: that I never loved her." Crystal City, Texas, 1944. Margot and Haruka are imprisoned together in a US family internment camp. The two strike up a secret friendship amidst questions of their parents' and their own patriotism. Margot watches her mother's health decline and her father grow more comfortable with Nazi sympathizers. Haruka makes friends at the high school in the camp but feels suffocated by the heat, dust, and fears for her Japanese-American brother fighting in the US army. For those who love historical fiction and those who love WWII books.

***Warcross* by Marie Lu**

From Marie Lu, the author of the *Legend* and the *Young Elites* series, comes a new dystopian series. A game called Warcross and the NeuroLink technology, which millions of people log into every day, has revolutionized the world, changing normal everyday life. Emika Chen is a hacker and a bounty hunter. She hunts down players who bet on the game illegally. Then, accidentally she hacks into the world-wide championships of the popular game Warcross. She assumes she will be arrested until Hideo Tanaka contacts her with a business proposal: finds the hacker known as Zero, and as cover be a player in the championships of Warcross. Emika is immersed in a world in which she can only trust herself but must at the same time build relationships in a dangerous, competitive, challenging game. A fast-paced page turner that any

reader will enjoy. “A stellar cyberpunk series opener packed with simmering romance and cinematic thrills”--Kirkus Reviews.

***When We Collided* by A.L. Jackson**

We are seventeen and shattered and still dancing. We have messy, throbbing hearts, and we are stronger than anyone could ever know... Jonah never thought a girl like Vivi would come along. Vivi didn't know Jonah would light up her world. Neither of them expected a summer like this...a summer that would rewrite their futures. In an unflinching story about new love, old wounds, and forces beyond our control, two teens find that when you collide with the right person at just the right time, it will change you forever. Emery Lord writes a contemporary novel bursting with vivid characters, infectious humor, adorable romance, and bittersweet truth as well as one of the best depictions of depression/mental illness. For those interested in psychology and mental health, mental health related careers.

***A Whole New Mind* by Daniel Pink**

What do you think of when you think of a successful future? Brainiacs solving equations or CEOs sitting in large offices? Using research Pink explains the new six human abilities crucial to success in our world today. This is the type of book that can help you prepare for the future that in reality is already here. That future belongs to a new set of people, the people who invent, create, illustrate, produce art, can empathize with others, and they have a name, right brain thinkers. Pink helps you prepare for the new future and shows how you can get ahead through an in-depth analysis of right and left brain thinkers. You discover your dominant side of the brain and explore your thought processes and strengths. Get a head start to the game and explore this whole new mind of the turning century.

***Women in Science* by Rachel Ignatofsky**

Are you interested in science? Women's history? If either of these apply to you, this book will be the perfect fit. A beautifully designed and executed book with colorful illustrations accompanying every page, dive into the history of countless women scientists, familiar or not, who helped make great strides in our world. Realize just how much of an impact women such as Lise Meitner, Marjory Stoneman Douglas, and Maryam Mirzakhani have had on the field of science, from thousands of years ago right up to the present day. It will be hard to forget any of these inspirational women of science after picking up this book. For those enrolled in IB or other */science courses at VRHS. Great read for those interested in science related careers.