



May 2009

Dear Upper School Parents and Students,

Each year we ask our students to continue their learning through the summer. The acquisition of knowledge and the exercise of intellectual curiosity—and reading for aesthetic pleasure, of course!—are activities that we strongly feel should not cease in the summer months. Consequently, the English Department is providing a summer reading list for Upper School students for the coming months.

We have divided our recommendations by grade level. Students in Forms III - VI must:

- a) read one *required* course-specific text (listed below):

Form III: *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* (Betty Smith)

Form IV: *Balzac and the little Chinese Seamstress* (Sijie)

Form V: *The Scarlet Letter* (Hawthorne)—we recommend Penguin Classics, ISBN 0-14-243726-3

Form VI: *White Teeth* (Zadie Smith) – we recommend Vintage Books, ISBN 0375703861

- b) **In addition**, students must read one additional book from the appropriate grade-level *suggested* title list (attached below).

Regarding the *required* course-specific text, each grade is assigned a different text, selected to fit the theme of the course. At the beginning of the year, students will be assessed on these texts.

On the *suggested* title list, the classics marked with an asterisk would be an appropriate choice for any grade. In addition, for those rising sophomores who wish to pursue Honors distinction in Grade 10, summer is a good time to tackle one of these classic pieces of literature.

We encourage parents to join students in reading and talking about many of the books on the attached list.

We are sure that students will find on this list many books they can read and enjoy. And of course, we hope they read far beyond the list!

Have a wonderful summer!

Yours truly,

Laura Gerard
English Department Chair

Denise Brown-Allen, Ed.D.
Upper School Director

SUMMER READING LIST PINGRY UPPER SCHOOL 2009

Books recommended for incoming freshmen:

- Adams, Douglas. *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. Arthur Dent begins his wild journey in time and space.
- Adams, Richard. *Watership Down*. An epic novel about a group of rabbits journeying to and establishing a new society. A wonderful look at democratic leadership.
- Alvarez, Julia. *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*. Four sisters from the Dominican Republic find in New York a very different life from the genteel existence they left behind.
- Auel, Jean. *The Clan of the Cave Bear*. Prehistoric days brought to vivid life.
- Buck, Pearl. *The Good Earth*. Life in China before the Communist Revolution.
- Card, Andrew Scott. *Ender's Game*. Science fiction with a youthful hero.
- Cisneros, Sandra. *Mango Street*. Linked stories about a young Hispanic-American woman's growing up.
- Dumas, Alexandre. *The Count of Monte Cristo*. The famous story of Edmond Dantes' imprisonment and revenge.
- Duncan, David J. *The River Why*. Gus tries to escape his problems by setting up a solitary fishing camp but discovers that he cannot escape the past or flee from his future.
- Follett, Ken. *The Pillars of the Earth*. An engrossing novel set in medieval England.
- Forster, E.M. *A Room With a View*. A young British woman learns that passion can indeed overcome barriers of class.
- Forsyth, Frederick. *The Day of the Jackal*. A plot to assassinate DeGaulle.
- Haddon, Mark. *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. An autistic first person narrator tries to find out who murdered a dog. It has been called "original and moving."
- Herbert, Frank. *Dune*. A classic creation of an alternate world.
- Hornby, Nick. *About a Boy*. He inherits the money that his father earned from his one hit song and hasn't much to do with his time until his life is interrupted by a strange boy.
- Kidd, Sue Monk. *The Secret Life of Bees*. An unlikely friendship leads a southern teen to new experiences during the era of the campaign for civil rights.
- Kincaid, Jamaica. *Annie John*. A childhood in the Caribbean.
- Lord, Betty Bao. *Spring Moon*. A semi-autobiographical novel about life in pre-1949 China.
- McBride, James. *The Color of Water*. An African-American man tells the remarkable story of his white Jewish mother, who raised eleven children on her own.
- McCourt, Frank. *Angela's Ashes*. The autobiographical story of a boy's harsh childhood in Ireland and his quest to come to America for a better life.
- McCullers, Carson. *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*. A group of lonely people find one another for a time.
- Michener, James. *The Source*. A series of stories that trace the history of Israel.
- Moriarty, Laura. *The Center of Everything*. Talented but poor, Evelyn succeeds in her quest to attend college.
- Paton, Alan. *Cry, the Beloved Country*. A story about two fathers under apartheid in South Africa.
- Renault, Mary. *The King Must Die, The Bull From the Sea, The Praise Singer*. Renault brings ancient Greece to life in these novels
- Roth, Philip. *Goodbye, Columbus*. Coming of age in the Fifties: Newark meets Short Hills.
- Sittenfeld, Curtis. *Prep*. An Indiana teenager wins a scholarship to an eastern boarding school.
- Steinbeck, John. *The Grapes of Wrath, East of Eden*. Two big Depression Era novels by the author of *Of Mice and Men*.
- Stewart, Mary. *The Hollow Hills, The Crystal Cave*. The story of Merlin and Arthur in early Britain.
- Tan, Amy. *The Joy Luck Club*. Four Chinese mothers and their Chinese-American daughters grapple with cultural and generational conflicts.
- Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. A fascinating mythological adventure world.
- Vonnegut, Kurt. *Cat's Cradle, Slaughterhouse Five*. Two satiric novels with science fiction elements.
- White, T.H. *The Once and Future King*. The story of King Arthur retold with humor and pathos.

Books recommended for incoming sophomores:

- *Austen, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice, Sense and Sensibility, Emma*. Austen presents satiric pictures of the quest for matrimony in early nineteenth-century Britain.
- *Balzac, Honore. *Pere Goriot*. Coming of age in nineteenth century Paris.
- *Bronte, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. A young governess falls in love with her employer and discovers a terrible secret.
- *Bronte, Emily. *Wuthering Heights*. Meet the brooding Heathcliff and the rebellious Catherine in this famous romantic novel set in Yorkshire.
- Burgess, Anthony. *A Clockwork Orange*. Violence marks the underclass in this futuristic British novel.
- *Camus, Albert. *The Plague*. An outbreak of plague in Oran elicits the courage of a doctor.
- Chevalier, Tracy. *The Girl with a Pearl Earring*. A brief, beautifully written novel about the painter Johannes Vermeer, told from the point of view of the new maid, who possesses artistic talent herself.
- *Collins, Wilkie. *The Moonstone, The Woman in White*. Two Victorian thrillers.
- *Dickens, Charles. *Oliver Twist, Bleak House, Hard Times*. Life in Victorian England is vividly presented. Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities* is a romantic historical novel about the French Revolution.
- *Dostoevski, Feodor. *Crime and Punishment*. The famous Russian novel about a poor student who murders to test a theory and finds himself haunted by guilt.
- DuMaurier, Daphne. *Rebecca*. A wildly romantic story about a second wife who feels haunted by the presence of the first one.
- *Flaubert, Gustav. *Madame Bovary*. Emma Bovary's desire to escape from her boring life in the provinces comes to a tragic end.
- Gaarder, Jostein. *Sophie's World*. A mystery story that is also about the history of philosophy.
- Galsworthy, John. *The Forsyte Saga*. An intricate, many-charactered novel that traces three generations of a wealthy English family.
- Heller, Joseph. *Catch 22*. The famous novel of World War II about Yossarian, a traumatized bombardier.
- Huxley, Aldous. *Brave New World*. Science fiction meets the savage world.
- Keneally, Thomas. *Schindler's List*. A fictionalized but true story about a German factory owner who saved a group of Jews from death in the Holocaust.
- Kingston, Maxine Hong. *China Men, Woman Warrior, Tripmaster Monkey*. Novels about powerful individuals in conflict with their societies.
- LeCarre, John. *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold; Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy*. Two very famous spy novels about the Cold War.
- Martel, Yann. *Life of Pi*. A weird and wonderful survival story with a philosophical bent.
- Orwell, George. *1984*. England has become a totalitarian country, watched over by Big Brother.
- Rhys, Jean. *Wide Sargasso Sea*. If you enjoyed *Jane Eyre*, this short novel retells the story from the point of view of the mad woman in the attic.
- Rice, Anne. *The Vampire Chronicles*. One of a popular series.
- Sebold, Alice. *The Lovely Bones*. A girl looks down at the life her murder took from her.
- *Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*. Here is the original story of the scientist who created life and the havoc wreaked by his creation.
- Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr. *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. A short but powerful novel about a prisoner in a Russian gulag, written by the Nobel Prize novelist.
- *Stendhal. *The Red and the Black*. Political life in nineteenth-century France.
- Stone, Irving. *The Agony and the Ecstasy*. A fictionalized biography of the Renaissance sculptor Michelangelo.
- Styron, William. *Sophie's Choice*. A young Southerner comes of age through his relationship with his neighbors, a beautiful Polish Holocaust survivor and her charismatic boyfriend.
- Tan, Amy. *The Kitchen God's Wife*. A novel about the Chinese in America.
- *Tolstoy, Leo. *Anna Karenina, War and Peace*. Two huge family novels about life in nineteenth century Russia.
- *Turgenev, Ivan. *Fathers and Sons*. Two fathers and two sons in Russia during the nineteenth-century.
- Vreeland, Susan. *The Girl in Hyacinth Blue*. Trace the history of painting through the stories of the individuals who temporarily possessed the portrait of the girl in hyacinth blue.

Books recommended for incoming juniors:

- Acito, Mark. *How I Paid for College*. A funny first novel about a teen who wants to go to Juilliard
- Atwood, Margaret. *Oryx and Crake* and *The Handmaid's Tale*. Two futuristic stories about life after genetic and climate change and human frailty have made a mess.
- Banks, Russell. *Rule of the Bone*. A story about a contemporary Huck Finn.
- Boyle, T.C. *Drop City*. Members of a California commune move to Alaska and find new challenges.
- Carroll, Jim. *The Basketball Diaries*. A gripping story about a teenager's struggle with poverty and drugs.
- Cather, Willa. *My Antonia*. A story about a courageous immigrant in South Dakota.
- Conroy, Frank. *Body and Soul*. If you love music, you'll love this story about a young and poor musical genius befriends by a music store owner in New York in the forties and fifties.
- Crane, Stephen. *The Red Badge of Courage*. A young man finds his courage during a Civil War battle.
- Dreiser, Theodore. *Sister Carrie*. Chicago and New York at the turn of the century.
- Doctorov, E. L. *Ragtime*. A blend of real and fictional characters conveys the many textures of American life just before the Great War.
- Erdrich, Louise. *Love Medicine*. A multigenerational saga of two extended families who live on and around a Chippewa reservation in North Dakota.
- Faulkner, William. *Intruder in the Dust*, *The Unvanquished*. Two powerful works set in America's South.
- Fitzgerald, Scott. *This Side of Paradise*, *Tender Is the Night*. Two novels by the author of *The Great Gatsby*.
- Frasier, Charles. *Cold Mountain*. A wounded soldier returns from the Civil War.
- Gaines, Ernest J. *A Gathering of Old Men*. Someone killed a white man, and the black men of the town are all claiming responsibility for the crime.
- Goldberg, Myla. *The Bee Season*. An exquisite first novel in which a family is shaken apart by a small but unexpected shift when nine-year-old Eliza wins a local spelling bee.
- Haruf, Kent. *Plainsong* and *Eventide*. Life in a small Colorado town, Gentle and absorbing.
- Hemingway, Ernest. *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. An idealistic American fights in the Spanish Civil War.
- Hurston, Zora Neale. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Hurston's feisty heroine demands to make her own decisions about her life and love.
- James, Henry. *Daisy Miller*. A rich young American on her first visit to Europe. *Portrait of a Lady*. A freedom-loving American woman makes a disastrous marriage.
- Jiles, Paulette. *Enemy Women*. A Civil War novel focused on women's lives.
- Kerouac, Jack. *On the Road*. Sal and his friends travel back and forth across the United States, wanting life, fleeing madness.
- Lamb, Wally. *She's Come Undone*. Lamb is a great storyteller who makes you care about his unusual heroine.
- Mailer, Norman. *The Naked and the Dead*. A famous novel of World War II.
- Morrison, Toni. *Beloved*, *The Bluest Eye*, *Jazz*. Complex and powerful novels about the African-American experience.
- Proulx, E. Annie. *The Shipping News*. A newspaperman recovers from a divorce by returning to his roots in Newfoundland.
- Russo, Richard. *Empire Falls*. A family novel set in a fading factory town in Maine.
- Smiley, Jane. *A Thousand Acres*. The King Lear story retold through a farming family in Iowa.
- Smith, Lee. *Oral History*. A college student researching her Appalachian roots discovers more than she might have expected about her family's past.
- Styron, William. *The Confessions of Nat Turner*. A fictionalized account of Nat Turner's rebellion.
- Tyler, Anne. *St. Maybe*. An engrossing family novel by the Baltimore novelist.
- Twain, Mark. *Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *Pudd'nhead Wilson*. Also by the creator of Huckleberry Finn.
- Warren, Robert Penn. *All the King's Men*. A great political novel based on the life of Huey Long.
- Wharton, Edith. *The Age of Innocence*, *The House of Mirth*. Two critical looks at life among New York City's very rich.

Books recommended for incoming seniors: EB(EuroBrit) and WL (World Lit) mean that the novel is more relevant to one course or the other.

- Ali, Monica. *Brick Lane*. The lives of two sisters in Bangladesh take different turns. WL
- Allende, Isabel. *Paula*. A nonfiction work in which Allende shares her life story with her dying daughter. WL
- Eva Luna* follows the adventures of Eva, who escapes oppression through storytelling. WL
- Appelfeld, Aharon. *Badenheim, 1939, The Iron Track*. This Israeli novelist explores aspects of the Holocaust. EB
- Atwood, Margaret. *The Robber Bride*. This Canadian writer has created a malicious protagonist. EB
- Byatt, A. S. *Possession, Angels and Insects*. A contemporary British writer looks back at the Victorian Age and reveals its passions. EB
- Coetzee, J.M. *Disgrace*. A white South African professor is forced to confront the disastrous repercussions and aftermath of the apartheid era. WL
- *Conrad, Joseph. *Lord Jim*. Jim spends the rest of his life trying to atone for an act of cowardice. WL
- *Eliot, George. *The Mill on the Floss*. An autobiographical novel about a brother and sister. EB
- Esquivel, Laura. *Like Water for Chocolate*. An ebullient and imaginative narrative about an unusual young Mexican woman. WL
- Golden, Arthur. *Memoirs of a Geisha*. A fascinating look at the storied figure of the Japanese geisha and the culture that created her. WL
- *Hardy, Thomas. *The Mayor of Casterbridge, The Return of the Native, Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. Hardy sets his tragic novels in southwestern England. EB
- Hesse, Herman. *Demian, Siddhartha, Steppenwolf*. Philosophical novels by a modern German writer. EB
- Hornby, Nick. *High Fidelity*. A humorous account of a record store owner's tumultuous relationships in central London. EB
- Jin, Ha. *Waiting*. A doctor married to a Chinese peasant is kept from happiness by the Communist regime. WL
- War Trash* is about the Korean War. WL
- *Joyce, James. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. The autobiographical first novel by the famous twentieth century Irish author. EB
- Kingsolver, Barbara. *The Poisonwood Bible*. A family of women accompany their husband and father as he ventures into the Congo as an impassioned missionary. EB/WL
- Lahiri, Jhumpa. *Interpreter of Maladies*. Eight unusual short stories about the lives of Indians. WL
- Kundera, Milan. *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*. Czechoslovakia under the Communists. EB
- *Lawrence, D. H. *Sons and Lovers*. A coming-of-age novel marked by a conflict between a mother and girlfriend for the allegiance of the man they both love. EB
- Marquez, Gabriel Garcia. *The Old Gringo, One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Latin American classics. WL
- McEwan, Ian. *Atonement*. This recent novel's protagonist finds that the life of the imagination brings with it moral responsibilities. *Amsterdam* is a short but potent novel about a sex scandal in the upper reaches of British politics. EB
- Mukherjee, Bharati. *Desirable Daughters, The Tiger's Daughter*. Cultural conflicts in the lives of Indians who have lived in America. WL
- Patchett, Anne. *Bel Canto*. A romantic novel about the relationships that develop during a hostage siege in a Latin American country. WL
- Rushdie, Salman. *Haroun and the Sea of Stories, Midnight's Children*. Magical realism set in India. WL
- Sayers, Dorothy. *The Nine Tailors*. A very proper and engrossing British mystery. EB
- Smith, Zadie. *White Teeth*. An exuberant first novel about two multicultural families living in today's London. WL/EB
- Tsitsi, Dangarembga. *Nervous Conditions*. Two young Rhodesian women struggle to pursue an education and a clear sense of self in the face of culturally based sexism and the effects of colonialism. WL
- *Woolf, Virginia. *Mrs. Dalloway, To the Lighthouse*. Two famous early twentieth century novels about family life, art, and the difficulties of making true connections. EB