

## 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 the following bookstores:  
Essex Books – Centerbrook  
R.J. Julia Booksellers - Madison  
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.

### 2012 Faculty and Student Committee

David Ballantyne  
Linnea Barbour  
Kathleen Bergman  
Anna D'Agostino  
Stephanie Clapp  
Teresa Cobb  
Carolyn Crehan  
Erin Dayton  
Cindy Downie

Neve Flynn  
Charlotte Gephart  
Jessica Grote  
Alex Haughton  
Aryanah Haydu  
Mary Jo Helchowski  
Morgan Hines  
Sophy Johnston

Marina Kohary  
Mackenzie Korcak  
Emily LeGrand  
Josef Lenz  
Caroline Madden  
Cindy Maiolo  
Sarah McKinney  
Amanda Mitchel  
Elias Mueller

Michaela Paholski  
Brian Patterson  
Coral Rawn  
Tyler Saunders  
Kristie Schmidt  
Jenna Tiezzi  
Abby Wolff  
Amy Zuse

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.

***The Psychopath Test* by Jon Ronson has been chosen by Chester Public Library  
as their summer discussion book: August 15, 2012 at 3:30 p.m.**



## 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 2012-2013 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. **If you choose this year's book to movie: Moneyball, there is a required project—no choice.**
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**

### **\*Special required project for *Moneyball*:**

We recommend you read the book first and then pause frequently during movie viewing to take notes (Venn diagram or T-chart) about each of the following: how the director and screenwriter were true to the book (or not) in the following categories: plot, character, theme (message), setting (film location), costuming, and casting. Support with evidence from both text and film. Also discuss how the cinematography (wide, medium, close up shots, and editing) and soundtrack enhance or detract from the atmosphere created by Michael Lewis. Discuss any scenes or dialogues that were enhanced, shortened, eliminated or had their chronological order changed, and the impact those changes had on the film. **Be very specific with your examples. Your work must prove that you did not simply watch the movie version or read a book summary.**

**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.

**Mock (or real) Web Page-** Design your own mock (or real) web page (Word version is acceptable) detailing your book choice. Your web page must include links that depict the characters, plot, setting, theme, and significance of the book. Each link must contain a minimum of one paragraph explaining the five topics in the previous sentence. You must also choose three significant quotes from your book that you feel best represent the overall story and explain why.

**Timeline-** Create a timeline to illustrate the events in your novel. Your timeline should include 15 events—each event illustrated with captions. Your timeline should present a clear beginning, middle, and end. Captions/illustrations can be created using various mediums (hand drawn, computer generated, magazine cutouts, etc.,) and captions must clearly indicate why you chose each event to illustrate.

**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 script should follow your movie 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**

### 2012 VRHS Summer Reading Selections

Author	Title	Genre	Level
Bradbury, Ray	Fahrenheit 451	Fiction	1, 2
Carr, Nicholas	The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains	NF	1
Dasher, James	Maze Runner	Fiction	2, 3
Ellsworth, Loretta	In Search of Mockingbird	Fiction	3
Ellison, Alex	A Star to Sail Her By: A Five-Year Odyssey of Coming of Age at Sea	NF	all
Gladwell, Malcolm	Outliers: The Story of Success	NF	1
Green, John	The Fault in Our Stars	Fiction	all
Guidry, Jeff	An Eagle Named Freedom: My True Story of a Remarkable Friendship	NF	2, 3
Hall, Ron	Same Kind of Different as Me	NF	all
Isaacson, Walter	Steve Jobs	NF	1
King, Stephen	Cell	Fiction	all
*Lewis, Michael	*Moneyball (book to movie project)	NF	1, 2
Luttrell, Marcus	Lone Survivor: The Eyewitness Account of Operation Redwing and the Lost Heroes of Seal Team 10	NF	all
Morgenstern, Erin	The Night Circus	Fiction	1
Napoli, Lisa	Radio Shangri-la: What I Discovered on My Accidental Journey to the Happiest Kingdom on Earth	NF	1,2
Oliver, Lauren	Before I Fall	Fiction	2
Reilly, Matthew	Ice Station	Fiction	2,3
Robison, John Elder	Look Me in the Eye	NF	all
**Ronson, Jon (Chester Library book discussion 8/15 at 3:30)	The Psychopath Test: A Journey Through the Madness Industry	NF	1, 2
Roth, Veronica	Divergent	Fiction	all
St. John, Warren	Outcasts United: An American Town, a Refugee Team, and One Woman's Quest to Make a Difference	NF	1,2
Schuyler, Nick	Not Without Hope	NF	all
Schwarz, Christina	Drowning Ruth	Fiction	1,2
Sheff, Nic	Tweak: Growing up on Methamphetamines	NF	all
Taylor, Laini	Daughter of Smoke and Bone	Fiction	2
William, Thomas Chatterton	Losing My Cool: Love, Literature, and a Black Man's Escape from the Crowd	NF	1,2
Wood, Patricia	Lottery	Fiction	1, 2
Zuckoff, Mitchell	Lost in Shangri-la: A True Story of Survival, Adventure, and the Most Incredible Rescue Mission of World War II	NF	1, 2

## 2012 VRHS Faculty and Student Reviews

**Bradbury, Ray. *Fahrenheit 451*.** Ray Bradbury's internationally acclaimed novel *Fahrenheit 451* is a masterwork of twentieth-century literature set in a bleak, dystopian future. – Amazon.com Guy Montag is a fireman. In his world, where television rules and literature is on the brink of extinction, firemen start fires rather than put them out. His job is to destroy the most illegal of commodities, the printed book, along with the houses in which they are hidden. Montag never questions the destruction and ruin his actions produce, returning each day to his bland life and wife, Mildred, who spends all day with her television "family." But then he meets an eccentric young neighbor, Clarisse, who introduces him to a past where people didn't live in fear and to a present where one sees the world through the ideas in books instead of the mindless chatter of television. When Mildred attempts suicide and Clarisse suddenly disappears, Montag begins to question everything he has ever known. He starts hiding books in his home, and when his pilfering is discovered, the fireman has to run for his life.

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**Carr, Nicholas. *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*.** Have you ever wondered, "What is the internet doing to my brain?" If so then *The Shallows* by Nicholas Carr is the book for you. We live in a world where we can say something to Siri and she could Google it in a flat out second. Everyone either has an apple product, uses social networking, or Googles for the fun of it. Carr even admits about technology that, "It's cool, I'm not sure I could live without it." Well, think of the Internet as a drug, once you use that drug frequently, your mind and body needs it or craves it. This is the same way with the Internet. Carr explains in his book that the Internet, in a way, is rewiring our brains. For example, a book served to focus our attention, promoting deep and creative thought. However, the Internet encourages rapid, distracted sampling of small bits of information. As we use scanning and skimming to help us read things quickly, we are losing our capacity for concentration. Without us even knowing it, technology is reshaping our brains or making us act differently. For most people, they could be attempting to read a book and without realizing it, they're checking their Facebook, Twitter, or email. In *The Shallows*, Carr explains why we are having difficulty reading and focusing on things. Nicholas Carr was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for his book and it was a *New York Times* Bestseller. *Wall Street Journal* says that the book was, "absorbing [and] disturbing." Also, *American Scientist* states that it is "A book everyone should read." Once you read this book, you will never look at technology and the internet the same.

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**Dasher, James. *Maze Runner*.** Thomas wakes up an elevator and he cannot remember anything about his past. When he reaches the top he is pulled into the Glade, where a new boy arrives every 30 days, but the problem is, they can't find a way out. It is one huge maze. When a comatose girl arrives with a note, their world begins to change. Read *Maze Runner* to find out where the maze leads the group and if they are ever able to escape. This is the first book of a trilogy.

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**Ellsworth, Loretta. *In Search of Mockingbird*.** Sometimes the things that need to be discovered aren't so easily found at home. Erin is certain that this is true in her case. A book is all that connects Erin to her mother, who died when she was a baby. But, how much can Erin really learn about her mother from a tattered copy of *To Kill a Mockingbird*? On the eve of her sixteenth birthday, Erin decides it's finally time to find out. And so begins her bus journey from Minnesota to Alabama in search of Harper Lee, the reclusive author of *Mockingbird*. In a novel full of quirky characters, strange coincidences, and on-the-road adventures, Loretta Ellsworth deftly traces a unique voyage of self-discovery.

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**Ellison, Alex. *A Star to Sail Her By: A Five-Year Odyssey of Coming of Age at Sea*.** This is a captivating story, informational for sailors thinking of cruising the Caribbean and beyond. Alex Ellison, from Essex, Connecticut, intertwines history, geology and humor throughout the narrative from each spot they visit. The stories about the people they meet and the bonds they create among other sailing families is wonderful. (Amazon.com)

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**Gladwell, Malcolm. *Outliers: The Story of Success*.** In *Outliers* Malcolm Gladwell explains that the success of people is very different. In order to understand how people become successful we must look around them. We have to look at things like their family history, where they were born, and sometimes even when they were born. Stories of success can be much more complex and interesting than they actually

appear. *Outliers* explains, among other things, the advantages of athletes, and the extraordinary success of Asians with math. The lives of outliers or people who have more success than the average person are part of an unexpected logic plan. This book pulls you in as it explains the way people become successful, and it allows you to learn the interesting ideas behind successful people. Chose *Outliers* to learn more about the ways of life and learn if you could be successful, too.

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**Green, John. *The Fault in Our Stars*.** *The Fault in Our Stars* is narrated by Hazel Grace, a sixteen year old girl living with incurable cancer. Knowing that death could be at any time, Hazel doesn't narrate in a depressing manner. She looks at the world with a realistic, sarcastic lens. Falling in love is always rough, but that is only exaggerated when the duration of a relationship is determined by terminal cancer. Not only is Hazel facing incurable cancer, but as it turns out, so is her boyfriend. Hopelessly in love, the two face this fate together, star-crossed lovers, somehow with a fault in their stars. A love story, a comedy, and a tragedy, *The Fault in Our Stars* is absolutely electric.

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**Guidry, Jeff. *An Eagle Named Freedom: My True Story of a Remarkable Friendship*.** *An Eagle Named Freedom* is a very touching book about a man named Jeff, his team of wildlife researchers and rescuers, as well as his companion Freedom, a bald eagle that he found and rescued with a broken wing. Along the way, Jeff found out he had cancer. With this upsetting news, Jeff and Freedom both had to work hard to stay healthy and happy, which did not pose as a problem for either of them. It is a heart-warming book that is strongly recommended for people who like to read about animals, as well as being able to hear a life changing story.

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**Hall, Ron. *Same Kind of Different as Me*.** Have you ever passed by a homeless man and wondered how they got to be homeless? Or have you ever taken a minute to think that the person you are talking to may have been homeless? In this book you will read about Denver Moore and the difficulties of his life as a homeless plantation worker, and Ron Hall who took in a homeless African American in Fort Worth, Texas. Moore was a young boy that was born into a family of poor plantation workers in rural Louisiana. As he got older he became a homeless drifter hopping on freight trains that would bring him all over the country. Eventually he ended up on the streets in Texas. This is where Hall and Moore met. Switching back and forth in short segments, two narrators portray authors Hall and Moore in memoirs that begin in distant walks of life and intersect in a homeless shelter.

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**Isaacson, Walter. *Steve Jobs*.** The Apple Company revolutionized the computer world. They created the friendly user interface that we all use today. It was because of Apple that computers became a personal device and not just a business one. And, of course, none of this would ever have happened without Steve Jobs. He took the Apple computer he and his friends created and turned it into a company. This book goes inside Steve Jobs' life, from when he was put up for adoption, to how he started Apple and created the Macintosh, to when he became the CEO of Apple. Dive deep into the creative process of how every Apple product was designed and manufactured. This biography details his drive for perfection and superior craftsmanship. This book covers his life from a childhood of drugs and Zen Buddhism all the way to his cancer and beyond.

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**King, Stephen. *Cell*.** At 3:00 in the afternoon, everyone talking on his/her cell phone suddenly turns into crazy, mindless, murderers, killing everything and everyone in their path. Clayton Riddell narrowly escapes the first few horrors he encounters and soon teams up with non-crazies Tom McCourt, and Alice Maxwell. Together, they travel to Maine in the hopes of finding Clayton's family alive and safe. Is it a virus? A zombie invasion? A government plan? No one knows as they struggle to survive. This apocalyptic story is suspenseful and horrific, perfect for anyone looking for action or gore. Stephen King's *Cell* won a Quill Award under the category 'Science Fiction/ Fantasy/ Horror. He has also received awards for most of his other books including *Night Shift*, *The Stand*, and *The Shining*. Many people love his eerie, well written books. If you like any of his others you will definitely like *Cell*.

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**\*Lewis, Michael. *Moneyball*.** "You need know absolutely nothing about baseball to appreciate the wit, snap, economy . . . and incisiveness of [*Moneyball*]. Lewis has hit another one out of the park." —Janet Maslin, *New York Times*. Billy Beane, the Oakland A's general manager, is leading a revolution. Reinventing his team on a budget, he needs to outsmart the richer teams. He signs undervalued players whom the scouts consider flawed but who have a knack for getting on base, scoring runs, and

winning games. *Moneyball* is a quest for the secret of success in baseball and a tale of the search for new baseball knowledge—insights that will give the little guy who is willing to discard old wisdom over big money. (Amazon.com)

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**Luttrell, Marcus. *Lone Survivor: The Eyewitness Account of Operation Redwing and the Lost Heroes of Seal Team 10.*** Four US Navy SEALs departed one clear night in early July 2005 for the mountainous Afghanistan-Pakistan border for a reconnaissance mission. Their task was to document the activity of an al Qaeda leader rumored to be very close to Bin Laden with a small army in a Taliban stronghold. Five days later, only one of those Navy SEALs made it out alive. This is the story of the only survivor of Operation Redwing, SEAL fire team leader Marcus Luttrell, and the extraordinary firefight that led to the largest loss of life in American Navy SEAL history. His squadmates fought valiantly beside him until he was the only one left alive, blasted by an RPG into a place where his pursuers could not find him. Over the next four days, terribly injured and presumed dead, Luttrell crawled for miles through the mountains and was taken in by sympathetic villagers who risked their lives to keep him safe from surrounding Taliban warriors. A born and raised Texan, Marcus Luttrell takes us from the rigors of SEAL training, where he and his fellow SEALs discovered what it took to join the most elite of the American special forces, to a fight in the desolate hills of Afghanistan for which they never could have been prepared. His account of his squadmates' heroism and mutual support renders an experience that is both heartrending and life-affirming. In this rich chronicle of courage and sacrifice, honor and patriotism, Marcus Luttrell delivers a powerful narrative of modern war. (Amazon.com)

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**Morgenstern, Erin. *The Night Circus.*** The author, Erin Morgenstern, created an intriguing love story filled with magic and adventure, within the plot of *The Night Circus*. The Night Circus is the home of two young magicians, Celia and Marco, who have been bound to a lifetime competition that exemplifies their special talents. Their stage for the competition is the circus itself, and their audience is those who visit the circus throughout the world. Within the book, the two competitors begin to love each other; however, their love begins to strain their competition and endangers the circus. Throughout the book, Celia and Marco must rival each other but still keep their love together whole and sincere. Because with all games, there can only be one winner.

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**Napoli, Lisa. *Radio Shangri-la: What I Discovered on My Accidental Journey to the Happiest Kingdom on Earth.*** Bhutan - ever heard of it? Blanketing discreetly between the borders of India and China, Bhutan is known as the 'happiest place on earth'. Not only will *Radio Shangri-La* inform you about the business of international radio, it will transport you to a world of fascinating architecture, stunning landscapes, and a culture still untouched by the outside, Western world. Having worked with CNN, MSNBC, and The New York Times, Lisa Napoli is chosen to set up the first national radio station in Bhutan. She finds herself in a country with no fully paved roads, giant, wooden penises on the outsides of houses, and hundreds of stray dogs roaming the streets. But, by exploring and experiencing Bhutan, Lisa is able to shed her past of pain and horror and bloom into an entirely new, more intelligent person. This book is raw and captivating and enlightening. You will become a master of the Buddhist religion, perhaps even practice some ideals yourself. Sometimes written like a self-help guide, *Radio Shangri-La* is a perfect summer read for those who love to travel and understand different cultures.

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**Oliver, Lauren. *Before I Fall.*** What would you do if death was imminent? What if, at the end of each day, death greeted you, only for you to relive the same day over and over? For Samantha Kingston, death became her reality. She was a popular high school student at Thomas Jefferson High. She had everything from the best boyfriend to the best parking spot. However, it all became a living hell. It started on Friday, February 12<sup>th</sup>. This is the day she would die, for the first time. She would relive this day seven times. Each day she would live it differently, learning new lessons and having different experiences. She was cursed to live the same day until making the ultimate sacrifice for an enemy. Through these experiences Sam will slowly unravel the true meaning of life-and death. Jay Asher, author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Thirteen Reasons Why* says, "You'll have no choice but to tear through this book!" and Carolyn Mackler, author of *Tangled* and, *The Earth, My Butt, and Other Big Round Things* calls it "...smart, complex, heartbreakingly beautiful...an extraordinary debut novel about what it means to live-and die."

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**Reilly, Mathew. *Ice Station*.** This incredibly unique and fast-paced novel captures the magically exciting tale of a discovery at an Antarctic ice station that is shrouded in intense mystery. A scientific experiment far below the ice has identified something with seemingly unnatural characteristics, while, at the same time, a group of scientists living in the station have disappeared on a routine expedition. Some think that alien life just may have been discovered, and they are desperate to get their hands on technology they believe may give them a powerful military advantage. As word spreads and more and more nations seek out an object they believe will be advantageous to possess, they are willing to use any means necessary in order to further themselves. While countries desperately fight for control over the ice station, the lives of the scientists who unknowingly brought about this turmoil are gravely endangered. They must struggle to escape the conflicts that are occurring, in order to save their own lives. This impressively creative read includes elements that are exciting to all readers and bring the story to a heart-stopping finish.

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**Robison, John Elder. *Look Me in the Eye*.** *Look Me in the Eye* by John Elder Robison is a memoir about Robison's life with Aspergers. Since he was little, John struggled. As a child, he faced many problems with making friends, fitting in, and his family life. Growing up, John had an abusive and alcoholic father and a psychopathic mother. The one thing John could count on was machines. After leaving his parents and dropping out of high school, he began an electronic deal with the legendary rock band KISS, and created the first fire-breathing guitar. After his gig with KISS, John gravitated toward a more professional job as an engineer for a popular toy company. It was then that John was informed by a therapist that he had Aspergers, which explained why all his life he had been different from everyone else. *Look Me in the Eye* is a touching and informative book. It gives you the perspective of a life dealing with a disability.

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**Roth, Veronica. *Divergent*.** All humans are born with basic traits, but as we grow older, we develop certain traits more than others. Now, imagine living in a world where our most prominent trait determines the rest of our lives. A world where, upon turning 16, one must choose a faction oriented around a single trait. That is the world of *Divergent*. *Divergent* follows a teenage girl named Beatrice Prior. She grew up in the Abnegation faction, which is centered around selflessness. However, during the aptitude tests, which tell 16-year-olds which faction they are best suited for, she learns that she is "divergent", and is suited for multiple factions. She is told by her test administrator to never tell this to anyone. The rest of the story follows Beatrice as she joins her new faction, and learns that things are not as simple as they seem, especially because she is divergent. Follow her as she meets new people, learns new skills, and struggles to uncover a deadly plot. *Divergent* has it all; action, mystery, and its fair share of romance. It spent time as the NYTimes #1 paperback bestseller list, who claims, "*Divergent* holds its own in the genre, with brisk pacing, lavish flights of imagination and writing that occasionally startles with fine detail." *Divergent* is sure to keep the pages turning, and your heart racing. It is sure to keep you wanting more, which isn't an issue because the next book in the series, *Insurgent*, just recently came out, and has also spent time as a NYTimes #1 bestseller.

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**Ronson, Jon. *The Psychopath Test: A Journey Through the Madness Industry*.** When you think of a psychopath (AKA sociopath), who do you think of? Do you ever wonder if you are one yourself? You probably think of a psychopath as an ugly serial killer that does many unspeakable things to his victims. The truth is, there are many psychopaths in the world around us whom you wouldn't even think of as being cold and manipulative. For the second question, if you are wondering about your mental status, then be at rest - chances are you are not a psychopath. In *The Psychopath Test*, Ronson discovers what really makes a psychopath. There are many hidden realities of the world revealed that readers would otherwise not know. There are twists and turns between politics and misdiagnosed mental disorders. Readers can have an opportunity to think about one of the most important questions: psychopaths who commit crimes - are they guilty, or are they not guilty by reason of insanity. *The Psychopath Test* is a great book for anyone to discover more about the mind and brain and their effects on who you are as person.

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**St. John, Warren: *Outcasts United: An American Town, a Refugee Team, and One Woman's Quest To Make a Difference*.** If you travel to Clarkston, Georgia, a small town outside of Atlanta, you would be surprised at what you would find: dozens of nationalities in the same small town. Ranging from Africa to Asia, it is a refugee camp for those from war torn countries. Clarkson High School has students from over 50 countries, all trying to adjust to the rapidly changing new modern world. Many boys shared a deep passion for soccer, and it was this sport that kept them out of ruthless gangs and away from other negative influences. Many of these players could not even

talk to each other, and they soon had gone from playing soccer in the street with a ball made of twine and plastic bags to having an organized team, with a real coach, breaking barriers. This is a great book for boys and girls, even if you don't like soccer. It looks through the minds of immigrants who come to our country, except in this case they are refugees, not immigrants. *Outcasts United* has received many awards and many colleges use it as a book for incoming freshmen to read. It is well written and you will not regret choosing it.

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**Schuyler, Nick. *Not Without Hope*.** Do you like survival stories? Stories of people who have been pushed to the brink of life and death and successfully survived to tell their miraculous story? If this is the case, then you will love the book, *Not Without Hope*. This amazing story of four football players stranded on their capsized boat seventy miles away from shore, in hypothermic temperatures is inspiring and a great page turner. Four grown men leave port for a fishing trip, and only one returns... this is Nick Schuyler's story.

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**Schwarz, Christina. *Drowning Ruth*.** "Powerful...suspenseful... Richly Textured . . . A chilling, precociously good start to a new novelist's career" (The New York Times). *Drowning Ruth* is tale of a family rivalry, secrets and obsession during WW1. In the winter of 1919, nurse Amanda Starkey suffers a mental breakdown and returns home to Wisconsin, seeking the comfort of her sister Matilda and her niece Ruth, who await the return of Matilda's war-injured husband. Matilda welcomes Amanda with open arms, convincing her that she will finally be able to heal. But then, on one tragic and confusing night, Matilda drowns. Soon after, Matilda's husband, Carl, returns to find that Amanda has taken charge of both the farm and Ruth with an alarming intensity. As the story progresses, Amanda reveals the details of the night her sister died, and the mystery unfolds.

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**Sheff, Nic. *Tweak: Growing up on Methamphetamines*.** Nic Sheff was drunk for the first time at age eleven. In the years that followed, he would regularly smoke pot, do cocaine and Ecstasy, and develop addictions to crystal meth and heroin. Even so, he felt like he would always be able to quit and put his life together whenever he needed to. It took a violent relapse one summer in California to convince him otherwise. In a voice that is raw and honest, Nic spares no detail in telling us the compelling, heartbreaking, and true story of his relapse and the road to recovery. As we watch Nic plunge into the mental and physical depths of drug addiction, he paints a picture for us of a person at odds with his past, with his family, with his substances, and with himself. It's a harrowing portrait—but not one without hope. (Amazon.com)

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**Taylor, Laini. *Daughter of Smoke and Bone*.** All of you *Twilight* fans, *Daughter of Smoke and Bone* is the new *Twilight*. However, instead of vampires and werewolves, have you even wondered what happens when devils and angels have lifetime hatred, but fall instantly in love? Karou is a 17 year old girl who was raised by devils that were in constant battle with the angels. When Karou finds herself falling in love with an angel, she doesn't know what to do. Her whole life, Karou has been trying to find out who she truly is, for she is obviously not a normal girl with knowledge to the devils lair, having hair that grows straight out of her head, and her knowledge of many different tongues, most not even human. Then, she finds out the angel knows where she came from, all from her possession of a mysterious wishbone. An enemy, and her star crossed lover, suddenly knows the answer to her most haunting question. Read this book to unmask the mystery of who the daughter of smoke and bone truly is, and why she is known as that title. Taylor did an amazing job writing this book, and just her awards alone prove it. This book was the hottest book of 2011, #6 on Amazon's top 20 books, and #1 on Amazon's best young adult. The Publisher's Weekly Best Book of 2011 said, "Taylor has a gift for creating spellbinding fantasies that feel wholly novel and utterly real. This one is the story of Karou, a 17-year-old art student in Prague, raised by demons and caught in an escalating war with angels. Taylor takes star-crossed romance, wonderfully complex characters, and a fascinating mythology and spins a magical, heartbreaking story," which is exactly what this book is. "She had been innocent once, a little girl playing with feathers on the floor of a devil's lair. She wasn't innocent now." Be drawn into this extraordinary story of fantasy, love, and discovery.

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**William, Thomas Chatterton. *Losing My Cool: Love, Literature, and a Black Man's Escape from the Crowd*.** *Losing My Cool*, a magnificently crafted autobiographical novel written by Thomas Chatterton Williams, touches upon the ever-present conflict between racial stereotypes and society's unreasonable conformity to them. Growing up in a middle-class, white suburb in New Jersey, Williams and his bi-racial family struggle to find their place in society. The subtitle of the book, ("How a Father's Love and 15,000 Books Beat Hip-Hop Culture"), indicates Thomas William's father, Pappy, and his extreme emphasis on

education. The novel describes two clashing cultures as Thomas juggles his interests of keeping up with the new hip-hop trends and maintaining his grades in school at the same time. As the subtitle reveals, Thomas is able to overcome the demeaning stereotypes assigned to the young African American population of our country, and rises to the top as both an artist and a writer. Although some may find this book excessively controversial, it sends a general message of non-conformity to its readers. It is true that Williams' criticism of modern hip-hop is solely opinionated, but the reader must look into the deeper meaning laced between the lines of the novel. Williams not only brings to light the debasing stereotypes assigned to the African American population, but also the reinforcement of these stereotypes by those so harshly opposed to them. Williams describes his adolescent experiences as he succumbed to the demands of his African American peers, but later shares of how he overcame social conformity and grew up to be the intellectual man his father hoped him to be. In a book review published by The New York Times, Williams' story is said to be "both deeply tragic and extremely hopeful" and his suggested for anyone interested in the plight of anti-conformity, or more specifically, the stereotypes of modern hip-hop culture.

**Wood, Patricia. *Lottery*.** Called "solid gold" by Jacquelyn Mitchard, *Lottery* is truly just that. This uplifting story will captivate you from the very first page with the satisfying, lovable hero, Perry L. Crandall. Perry has always been an outsider, since he has an IQ of seventy-six. Before his grandmother died, she taught him the most important lessons he'd need to know: the importance of words, how to play the lottery, and most of all, who to trust. This last lesson becomes crucial for Perry when he wins the lottery and his family descends on him, moving in on his new fortune, his fate, and the few true friends he has. But Perry has an important lesson for them: Never, ever underestimate Perry L. Crandall.

**Zuckoff, Mitchell. *Lost in Shangri-la: A True Story of Survival, Adventure, and the Most Incredible Rescue Mission of World War II*.** On May 13, 1945, twenty-four American servicemen and WACs boarded a transport plane for a sightseeing trip over "Shangri-La," a beautiful and mysterious valley deep within the jungle-covered mountains of Dutch New Guinea. Unlike the peaceful Tibetan monks of James Hilton's bestselling novel *Lost Horizon*, this Shangri-La was home to spear-carrying tribesmen, warriors rumored to be cannibals. But the pleasure tour became an unforgettable battle for survival when the plane crashed. Miraculously, three passengers pulled through. Margaret Hastings, barefoot and burned, had no choice but to wear her dead best friend's shoes. John McCollom, grieving the death of his twin brother also aboard the plane, masked his grief with stoicism. Kenneth Decker, too, was severely burned and suffered a gaping head wound. Emotionally devastated, badly injured, and vulnerable to the hidden dangers of the jungle, the trio faced certain death unless they left the crash site. Caught between man-eating headhunters and enemy Japanese, the wounded passengers endured a harrowing hike down the mountainside—a journey into the unknown that would lead them straight into a primitive tribe of superstitious natives who had never before seen a white man—or woman. Drawn from interviews, declassified U.S. Army documents, personal photos and mementos, a survivor's diary, a rescuer's journal, and original film footage, *Lost in Shangri-La* recounts this incredible true-life adventure for the first time. Mitchell Zuckoff reveals how the determined trio—dehydrated, sick, and in pain—traversed the dense jungle to find help; how a brave band of paratroopers risked their own lives to save the survivors; and how a cowboy colonel attempted a previously untested rescue mission to get them out. By trekking into the New Guinea jungle, visiting remote villages, and rediscovering the crash site, Zuckoff also captures the contemporary natives' remembrances of the long-ago day when strange creatures fell from the sky. A riveting work of narrative nonfiction that vividly brings to life an odyssey at times terrifying, enlightening, and comic, *Lost in Shangri-La* is a thrill ride from beginning to end. ([Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com))

