

Summer Reading Mission Statement

The intent of the VRHS 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.

VRHS Academic Expectations:

Students will comprehend written language
Students will speak effectively

Books are available at VRHS, local libraries, bookstores or from online sellers.
Most are available in paperback or in audio or e-book form.

2015 Faculty and Student Committee

Gabriel Bartolotta
Kevin Baldwin
Ian Bott
Rachel Breault
Addie Byars
Avery Carlson
Eme Carlson
Leslie Clapp
Teresa Cobb
McCaffrey Corbett

Carolyn Crehan
Cindy Downie
Jill Esernia
Maddy Evans
Mitch Holdmeyer
Troy Holland
Marissa Hunk
Allegra Kristoff
Juliette Linares
Claire Madden
Cindy Maiolo

Mia Marasco
Sarah McKinney
Jessica Paholski
Amanda Preble
Coral Rawn
Graham Rider
Jordan Sack
Kristie Schmidt
Kyra Streck
Gia Villafana

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.

172 Hours on the Moon has been chosen by Chester Public Library as their summer discussion book: August 6, 2015.

Valley Regional High School
Chester—Deep River--Essex

“Some books you read. Some books you enjoy. But some books just swallow you up heart and soul.”—Joanne Harris

Dear Parent or Guardian:

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

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

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

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

This year the committee is also recommending a parent read, *The Teenage Brain: A Neuroscientist's Survival Guide to Raising Adolescents and Young Adults* by Frances E. Jensen, M.D. and Amy Ellis Nutt. Drawing on her research knowledge and clinical experience, internationally respected neurologist—and mother of two boys—Jensen, offers a revolutionary look at the science of the adolescent brain, providing remarkable insights that translate into practical advice for both parents and teenagers.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Kristina Martineau
Principal

Kristie Schmidt
Library Media Specialist
Coordinator, Summer Reading Committee 2015

Summer Reading Instructions for First Book

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

1. Preview your book selection. Read the summer reading booklet, including the reviews of each book, before selecting a title.
2. Choose one book for your level from the Summer Reading list. Your level is the English class you will be in for the 2015-2016 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.
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 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, who you would recommend it to, and reasons why or why not.

Options for Summer Reading Oral Presentation Visual Aid Projects

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

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

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

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

Options for Summer Reading Oral Presentation Visual Aid Projects

(continued)

Resume and Business Cards- Research the proper format of a resume; a chronological resume will probably work best. 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 creativity. 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 minimum five entries: **Here's What Happened** (plot), **Here's Where It Happened** (setting, setting map), **Here's Who It Happened To** (character profiles), **Here's What It's All About** (theme), and lastly **Here's What I Think** (advice and/or personal connection). Design the booklet to look like a real guide, with illustrations, color, font, and text designed to grab the reader's interest and highlight information clearly.

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

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

Options for Summer Reading Oral Presentation Visual Aid Projects

(continued)

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

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

Alternate Presentation Option:

We'll discuss *172 Hours on the Moon* at the Chester Public Library on August 6. Check the library for time. This discussion *will* count towards your summer reading requirement.

Summer VRHS Reading Selections 2015

Author	Title	Genre	Level
Adams, Maureen	Shaggy Muses	NF	1
Aguirre, Ann	Enclave	F	2,3
Archer, Jennifer	The Shadow Girl	F	2,3
Bodeen, S.A.	The Compound	F	2,3
Bowen, James	A Street Cat Named Bob: And How He Saved My Life	NF	2,3
Brown, Daniel James	The Boys in the Boat	NF	1
Calcines, Eduardo F	Leaving Glory Town: One Boy's Struggle	NF	All
Chayil, Eishes	Hush	F	All
Christopher, Lucy	Stolen	F	2,3
Coelho, Paulo	The Alchemist	F	1
Eaton, Susan	The Children in Room E4	NF	1,2
Gardner, Daniel	The Science of Fear	NF	1
Graeber, Charles	The Good Nurse: A True Story of Medicine, Madness, and Murder	NF	1,2
Harstad, Johan	172 Hours on the Moon	F	All
Higson, Charles	The Dead	F	3
Jayne, Hannah	The Dare	F	1,2
King, A.S.	Reality Boy	F	All
Lockhart, E.	We Were Liars	F	1,2
Mandel, Emily St. John	Station Eleven	F	1
Munroe, Randall	What If?	NF	All
Nelson, Jandy	I'll Give You the Sun	F	1,2
Palacio, R.J.	Wonder	F	2,3
Quinn, Kate	Don't You Forget About Me	F	1,2
Schneider, Robyn	The Beginning of Everything	F	2,3
Scroff, Laura and Tresniowski, Alex	An Invisible Thread: the true story of an 11 year old panhandler	NF	2,3
Sedaris, David	Me Talk Pretty One Day	NF	1,2
Smith, Roland	Elephant Run	F	3
Wertheim, John	Scorecasting	NF	2,3
Wilson, Daniel	Robopocalypse	F	1,2

2015 VRHS Summer Reading List – Faculty, Student, and Amazon Reviews

Adams, Maureen. *Shaggy Muses*

“Lovers of both dogs and classic writers will identify with this sweet, quirky book” (*Publishers Weekly*). This intriguing nonfiction will pull the reader in.

Whenever something bad happens in our lives, dogs cheer us up and encourage us to keep on going. Author Maureen Adams had a troubling life grounded by encouraging and inspiring dogs just like the five writers, Virginia Woolf, Emily Dickinson, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Edith Wharton, and Emily Brontë, she describes and their dogs. As the *Chicago Tribune* said, “Move over Marley. Make room for Carlo (Emily Dickinson’s giant Newfoundland) or Flush (Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s golden cocker spaniel). . . . In *Shaggy Muses*, the work of each author is viewed intimately within the context of the canine companions who provided love, comfort and inspiration.” This detailed emotional book will pull you in with every page.

Aguirre, Ann. *Enclave*

Survival is the will to endure, one of the basic priorities of a living being. But how far would you go for your survival when your world has been consumed by war, plague and terrifying freaks of nature?

In this new world, humanity has retreated underground, trapped between a radioactive wasteland on the surface and victims of the nuclear fallout called freaks underground. Freaks feed on anything they can find. Groups of humans have come together to form their own tribal societies called enclaves. Since very little of the population reaches the age of twenty, children are named when they reach the age of fifteen during a naming ritual.

After a naming ceremony, a “brat” becomes Deuce. Deuce has been waiting for this moment for as long as she can remember. Now she is the proper age to become a huntress, one of three general positions in the enclave to ensure their survival. But after she is paired with the colony outcast as her hunter companion, she realizes that her society may not be as great as she originally thought.

Archer, Jennifer. *The Shadow Girl*

About a young girl, her family, and their secrets.

From a very young age, for as long as Lily Winston can remember, she has never been alone. Iris, a shadowy figure who mimics Lily's movements and whispers in her ear, is with her always -- but invisible to the rest of the world. After a tragedy, Lily's father's words suggest that he and Lily's mother have been hiding secrets of their own. Lily and her friend Hector are determined to find out what the secret is. As she searches for answers, Lily finds herself drawn to Ty Collier, a mysterious new boy in town. Together, Lily and Ty must untangle a web of deception to discover the truth about her family, Iris -- and Lily's own identity.

The Shadow Girl is a chilling, mind-bending mystery filled with stunning twists, haunting reveals, and a realistic setting with a supernatural touch that's perfect for fans of *Before I Fall* and *If I Stay*.

Bodeen, S.A. *The Compound*

Imagine never seeing any of your friends ever again, having to leave one of your siblings outside of safety while you sit behind the compound doors as the world undergoes a nuclear war. Or, having to live your life underground only experiencing artificial light, never again able to hear birds chirping or see one of your neighbors. It's just you and your family, alone.

Eli, the main character, winds up in an underground bunker his dad built for this day. In this multimillion dollar bunker, he has everything from a gym to an underground farm. As food

isn't limited, Eli's father decides to create "supplements", children they raise to be turned into their food supply.

This intense story takes major twists as it follows Eli and his struggles and is the definition of 'plot twist.' Rated 4.3 out of 5 stars on Amazon, all readers love this book! "Picked it up, parked on the couch and didn't move." (Amazon)

Bowen, James. *A Street Cat Named Bob: And How He Saved My Life*

What would you do if you came home after a long day of school and found a stray, injured cat lying on your doorstep? Would you leave it there? Or would you bring it inside, give it somewhere warm to sleep for the night, and then try your best to nurse it back to health?

This happened to James Bowen, a street musician in London, England. Struggling to make ends meet after facing drug addiction, the last thing James needed in his life was a pet, another mouth to feed, someone else to take care of. But little did he know just how much this stray, whom he later named Bob, would change his life.

The true tale of a man and his cat, it was ranked among the bestsellers in England for fifty-two consecutive weeks. *Booklist* says it best, "Stellar...A beautiful, never maudlin story of second chances for both man and beast and a poignant testimony to how much caring for someone -- or some feline -- can give you renewed direction when you're down and out." A book for people everywhere, cat and dog lovers alike will be moved by this story.

Brown, Daniel James. *The Boys in the Boat*

If you like the Olympics, rowing, or WWII then this book is a must read for you.

Everybody loves an Olympic underdog story. An Olympic underdog story combined with Hitler is sure to make an impact, and it definitely did, spending 44 weeks on the *New York Times* bestseller list.

The Boys in the Boat takes you from the childhood of a boy in the Great Depression to a team changing history in the 1936 Berlin Olympics. Simple farm boys and rich young men of society come together for their first feeble strokes as rowers. Those same boys later compete to become America's greatest rowing team. After the trials and tribulations of their races in college, the team goes to the Berlin Olympics. Eight men with different backgrounds, different stories, and different lives row together, furiously fast. With plenty of teamwork, pain, and gut-wrenching perseverance, the boys win.

The book showcases Nazi propaganda of the 1936 Olympics including the making of the film *Olympia*. It follows the woman who created the film, Leni Riefenstahl, who eventually changed how the 1936 Olympics were viewed.

Calcines, Eduardo F. *Leaving Glory Town: One Boy's Struggle Under Castro*

Have you wondered what it would be like to live through a revolution in a developing country? If so, *Leaving Glory Town* is the book for you. Given the recent opening of US diplomatic and other relations with Cuba, you might want to read this before you travel there.

This autobiography illustrates life before and after the 1959 revolution in Cuba. Readers will learn how Cuba's change of pace impacted families for better and for worse. Eduardo was born before "La revolucion", just four and a half years old when Castro came into power. At the beginning of the revolution, all he knew was of a voice taking over the airways of his neighborhood in Cienfuegos.. As he grew older, he began to notice differences within his community. Some of those differences included a constant military presence, supervision of everyday life, strict rations, and a significant decrease in personal possessions.

This book makes you ponder the ideologies and government reach of Fidel Castro, which have made freedom an unattainable reality for Cuban civilians for over half a century.

Chayil, Eishes. *Hush*

Gittel recounts sleeping over at Devory's house one night when she witnesses Devory being attacked. However, when Gittel tries to seek help from her ultra-conservative community, adults neglect her claims and do not shelter Devory, leading to her prolonged guilt about being a bystander to tragedy.

The story of two best friends living in Borough Park, New York, *HUSH* considers the nature of guilt and how to cope with trauma while intertwining comic relief. The book alternates narration from Gittel's pre-teens years, during which she is inseparable with Devory, and the present, when she is seeking a husband.

Chassidim is a Jewish Orthodox denomination so *Hush* gives an in-depth insight into the culture and Yiddish and Hebrew languages. In doing so, the book deals with modern anti-semitism and religious conservatism in modern America. The author, known by the pseudonym "Eishes Chayil"--which means "Woman of Valor" in Hebrew--or as Judy Brown, provides an analytical, non-biased view of the dangers and positives of the Chassidic world.

Christopher, Lucy. *Stolen*

Put yourself in the shoes of 16 year-old Gemma, a British city-living teenager, stolen from an airport where she was waiting for departure for a family vacation. As she steps away just for a moment to use the restroom and get something to drink, her life changes forever. After her kidnapping by 24 year-old Ty, she ends up in the wild land of outback Australia. She makes innumerable attempts to escape the harsh environment, but after a while Gemma begins to see Ty in a new light. Is her appreciation of Ty real love or Stockholm Syndrome?

Coelho, Paulo. *The Alchemist*

At first glance, one would think that Coelho's work had something to do with the ancient art of alchemy - converting lead to gold through the power of science! But the alchemist, in reality, is a narrative about a young man who (quite literally) follows his dreams to a far away land to seek out a long lost treasure. On the way, this boy discovers an old man's wisdom, falls in love, and realizes his purpose. Themes of "coming of age," introspection, self-reflection and self-discovery are present throughout the story, and make it lush with symbolism and thus, quite enjoyable.

Those with a passion for classic works of literature will appreciate the style of the prose, however one should be wary. *The Alchemist* is driven by elements of physical and mental growth through the perspective of an adolescent, and so is tailored to that particular audience. A reader should not approach *The Alchemist* expecting a timeless classic to rival the icons of the literary world, but rather a compelling story neatly stitched together with pleasantly simple to understand allegories.

Eaton, Susan. *The Children in Room E4*

Are you curious about the Connecticut education systems? Are you interested in learning how far education has come and occasionally how it falls short of expectations? Come along for this intense journey through an academic and civil rights struggle that happened in Connecticut's capital.

The Children in Room E4 tells the true story of a very talented elementary school student named Jeremy. Jeremy attends school in Hartford, CT where he is among poor minority students like himself. Eaton opens readers' eyes to the segregation of schools where there are both racial and economic divides between inner city students who attend poorly funded schools and wealthy suburban students who excel at their fully resourced schools. Jeremy struggles to find a school that gives him the opportunities he needs to succeed as Eaton traces the landmark Sheff v. O'Neil court case to desegregate education.

Eaton draws the reader in and captivates their minds with her style of writing and with the truths behind the story she tells. This book is sure to be a new favorite of everyone who picks it up.

Gardner, Daniel. *The Science of Fear*

What is fear? Why do certain things terrify us while others do not? How do we prioritize our fear? If these questions tickle your interest, this is the book for you!

Gardner states the facts: we as a human race are the strongest and healthiest we've ever been. Fear is a signal our brain sends to the rest of the body, triggering the flight or fight response. Back in the past, this instinct kept people alive. But now, we fear some things irrationally, and it's holding us back.

Creative nonfiction, the book is far from dry. It starts off with the 9/11 tragedy and how our fear of planes is irrational compared to the highly possible danger of getting into a car crash. Gardner discusses how we obtain irrational fear, and how that fear overrules fear of other things that, in reality, could potentially hurt us more.

If you like this book, *The Panic Virus* by Seth Mnookin is your next read!

Graeber, Charles. *The Good Nurse: A True Story of Medicine, Madness, and Murder*

"A standout true-crime book, one that doubles as both a thrilling horror story and a cautionary tale; frightens and frustrates in equal measure."—*The Boston Globe*

After his December 2003 arrest, registered nurse Charlie Cullen was quickly dubbed "The Angel of Death" by the media. But Cullen was no mercy killer, nor was he a simple monster. He was a favorite son, husband, beloved father, best friend, and celebrated caregiver. Implicated in the deaths of as many as 300 patients, he was also perhaps the most prolific serial killer in American history.

Cullen's murderous career in the world's most trusted profession spanned sixteen years and nine hospitals across New Jersey and Pennsylvania. In a riveting piece of investigative journalism nearly ten years in the making, journalist Charles Graeber presents the whole story for the first time. Based on hundreds of pages of previously unseen police records, interviews, wire-tap recordings and videotapes, as well as exclusive jailhouse conversations with Cullen himself and the confidential informant who helped bring him down, *The Good Nurse* weaves an urgent, terrifying tale of murder, friendship, and betrayal. (Amazon.com) "A stunning book...that should and does bring to mind *In Cold Blood*....*The Good Nurse* succeeds in being about much more than Mr. Cullen's murderous kinks. The causes of his pathology are not interesting. But the eagerness of ambitious hospital administrators to cover up his misdeeds is revelatory. And the police investigation that brought him down is a thriller in every sense of that word."—**Janet Maslin, *New York Times***

Harstad, Johan. *172 Hours on the Moon*

Booklist states, "This irresistible premise is often intoxicating and occasionally downright terrifying.... pretty darn effective." Get ready to jump into a suspense-filled novel which will keep you guessing until the end!

The year is 2018 and NASA has just announced a contest for teenagers for the chance to travel on a mission to return to the moon. NASA had stopped sending people to the moon in the seventies because of several sinister disappearances unknown to the public. Three teenagers from Norway, Japan, and France win this rare opportunity-of-a-lifetime, but it may be short-lived. Secrets lurk on the moon, and the astronauts begin to discover why missions had been stopped.

172 Hours on The Moon is a science fiction/horror novel which will leave you on the edge of your seat and quickly turning through the pages. Even if you think you know what's going to happen, the numerous shocking twists along the way ensure that you don't.

Higson, Charles *The Dead*

Picture your life changing completely in a matter of days. If you like series about suspense, drama, and zombie apocalypses, then this is the book for you.

This book has a similar concept to *The Walking Dead* and the *Rot and Ruin* series. It takes place in London, England where best friends Ed and Jack fight their zombie teachers. Everyone over 16 is infected with a virus, so the kids have to fend for themselves so they don't get eaten or infected. Jack, Ed, and 10 other boys are trapped in a dormitory with zombies scraping at their door. Read on to find out how Ed and Jack last in their zombie infested world.

Jayne, Hannah. *The Dare.*

Do you like the twists and turns and the unknown of a roller coaster ride? If you do, then you will enjoy "The Dare".

This is a story of two best friends, Brynna and Erica who do everything together until one night they both jump off a cliff into the California Ocean and Erica does not resurface. Brynna's overwhelming guilt causes her to see and hear things she is not sure are real.

Is her mind playing tricks on her? Has Erica returned from the dead? Perhaps she never died?

Enjoy the thrilling ride of what really happened that night.

King, A.S. *Reality Boy.*

In this fearless portrayal of a boy on the edge, highly acclaimed Printz Honor author A.S. King explores the desperate ration of a former child reality TV "star" struggling to break free of his anger and his past.

Gerald Faust, "The Crapper", started feeling angry even before his mother invited a reality TV crew into his five-year-old life. Twelve years later, he's still haunted by his rage-filled youth--which the entire world got to watch from every imaginable angle--and his anger issues have resulted in violent outbursts, zero friends, and clueless adults around him. Though years of anger-management training and a boxing-gym regimen have helped him gain better control, his future still feels limited to jail or death. No one cares that Gerald has tried to learn to control himself; they're all just waiting for him to snap. And he's starting to feel dangerously close to doing just that.

King's trademarks-first-person narrative, convincing dialogue, realistic language, and quirkiness-connect effectively in this disturbing, yet hopeful novel.

Lockhart, E. *We Were Liars*

What do you do when you don't know the truth or who you can trust enough to tell it to you? "There's trouble in paradise...[in]National Book Award finalist and Printz honoree E. Lockhart's shattering yet ultimately hopeful YA novel...neither family nor reader will ever be the same." - *Library Journal*

For the Sinclairs, every summer is a glittering occasion in their family compound on Martha's Vineyard. Surrounded by privilege, Sinclairs gather to spend warm days on the beach and discuss who is the most worthy recipient of Grandfather's extensive fortune. For the "liars", cousins Cadence (Cady), Johnny, and Mirren, this is the world they take for granted. Gat Patil, a nephew of their Aunt Carrie's boyfriend, views the liar's world of wealth with very different eyes. Cady quickly falls under Gat's spell and she and the liars embrace him as a member of their group.

But in summer fifteen an event takes place that sends Cady into a post-traumatic amnesic state from a mysterious head injury. Unable to remember what took place or how she has ended up with her illness, Cady seeks the help of Gat and her fellow liars to unfurl the mystery and find the answers she needs to help her recovery. "Thrilling, beautiful, and blisteringly smart, *We Were Liars* is utterly unforgettable." - John Green

Mandel, Emily St. John. *Station Eleven*

When describing a worldwide flu pandemic that wipes out 99% of the population, the adjectives "magical" and "glittering" do not immediately come to mind. Yet *Station Eleven* can be considered as such, and more. This story, about the obliteration of mankind, begins with a single, lonely death; that of a famous stage actor performing *King Lear*. The same night, a pandemic begins to sweep across the globe, taking massive numbers of lives in mere hours.

Twenty years later, a troupe of actors, dancers, and musical performers travel across the desolate landscape of the Great Lakes area, putting on plays and concerts for the sparse "townships" of people who still survive. However, after months of relative calm, the members come across the outcropping of St. Deborah by the Water, where citizens do not dare to leave their house, and a prophet ruler digs graves for those who leave.

Station Eleven glides effortlessly back and forth from past to present, intertwining threads of time and memories. It is a story of not just survival and chaos, but of the persistence of beauty and humankind.

Munroe, Randall. *What If?*

Have you ever wondered if everyone actually had only one soul mate? Or if the common cold could be wiped out by everyone staying away from one another? If you ever had these thoughts, or any other random questions then *What If?* is the perfect book for you! Even having no interest in these subjects, you're guaranteed to find this book gripping; a true page turner.

As the title suggests, *What If?* entertains crazy, nonsensical questions such as, "How many Lego bricks would it take to build a bridge capable of carrying traffic from London to New York?" and "When, if ever, will Facebook contain more profiles of dead people than living ones?" Munroe answers these questions using physics/science, math, and history in a language everyone can understand and enjoy.

Even if you have only a slight interest in science, you will walk away from *What If?* entertained and laughing. With the author's use of comics, humor, and simplified explanations; everyone from middle school to adulthood will love this masterpiece. Once you pick up a copy, you won't be able to put it down!

Nelson, Jandy. *I'll Give You the Sun*

Twins are unique. They share a special bond that no other set of humans have as illustrated in the realistic fiction novel *I'll Give You the Sun*. In this book, the twins are a boy and a girl named Judy and Noah. In some aspects, they are very different: Noah is gay, Judy straight, Noah is shy, Judy is an extrovert. But in others aspects, they are completely identical. Both twins are gifted artists. However, there is only one opening at CSA, the prestigious arts school they both want to attend.

Throughout the novel, the twins go through crazy phases of togetherness, distance, confusion, and unexplainable feelings. Written in alternating point of views and from various ages, the reader follows Judy and Noah through their difficult adolescence. This book is chaotic and confusing and beautiful. A must read on many Best of 2014 lists. The author, Jandy Nelson, is also famous for writing *The Sky is Everywhere*.

Palacio, R.J. *Wonder*

"You can't blend in when you were born to stand out."

Ten year old August "Auggie" Pullman has always embraced the way he looked. Despite his facial abnormality, he always felt like a normal kid, and that he could be one if others would just view him that way. Number 1 on the *New York Times* Bestseller list for 36 weeks, Palacio's story gives insight into how physical abnormalities affect both the person and others around them. More importantly, it reiterates the important lesson of not judging a book by its cover. Will

Auggie be able to teach his peers to accept others for who they are and survive the drama of middle school?

The novel is a “funny, frank, astonishingly moving debut to read in one sitting, pass on to others, and remember long after the final page.”(goodreads.com)

Quinn, Kate. *Don't You Forget About Me*

Imagine a paradise where no one ever dies or ever gets sick. This is Gardenville, except there is a price to pay for paradise. There is always a price to pay. Always. And the price gets deadlier every four years.

Kate Quinn's book tells the story of a seemingly Utopian town that hides a dark and dangerous secret from all who live there. When Skylar's sister, Piper, led 16 of her classmates to a bridge where all but she jumped off, she was locked up in a reformatory. Ever since, Skylar has lived in a drug-induced haze trying to forget. But when memories of her sister start resurfacing, Skylar figures out the only way to get her sister back is to stop Gardenville from claiming another victim.

The book will keep you on the edge of your seat and wanting more, as Quinn does not reveal anything more than you have to know about the world you are thrust into. Through flashbacks of past fourth year accidents you figure out the truth of what fuels this Utopian town to turn deadly.

Schneider, Robyn. *The Beginning of Everything*

The Beginning of Everything will appeal to fans of books by John Green and Ned Vizzini, novels such as *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, and classics like *The Great Gatsby* and *The Catcher in the Rye*.

Varsity tennis captain, Ezra Faulkner, was supposed to be homecoming king, but that was before—before his girlfriend cheated on him, before a car accident shattered his leg, and before he fell in love with unpredictable new girl Cassidy Thorpe. Funny, smart, and including everything from flash mobs to blanket forts to a poodle who just might be the reincarnation of Jay Gatsby, *The Beginning of Everything* is a refreshing contemporary twist on the classic coming-of-age novel—a heart-wrenching story about how difficult it is to play the part that people expect, and how new beginnings can stem from abrupt and tragic endings.

Scroff, Laura and Tresniowski, Alex. *An Invisible Thread: The True Story of an 11year old Panhandler*

“Because when I see kids come to school with their lunch in a brown paper bag, that means someone cares about them.”

A simple brown paper bag. That's all this 11 year old boy wanted. He didn't have a home, or a family, or even food for dinner, yet a brown paper bag would put a smile on his face. It's a cruel world we live in, Maurice and Laura both know that. Maybe that's what drew them together. Or maybe it was one simple question, “Excuse me, lady, do you have any spare change?”

These nine empty words, spoken over and over by hopeful souls usually get no sympathy and no reaction. Except with Laura it was different. That small moment in time on 56th and Broadway street in New York has forever touched the lives of many people, but has most importantly changed the lives of young Maurice and Laura.

Sedaris, David. *Me Talk Pretty One Day*

“At the end of a miserable day, instead of grieving my virtual nothing, I can always look at my loaded wastepaper basket and tell myself that if I failed, at least I took a few trees down with me.”

“The way I saw it, if my students were willing to pretend I was a teacher, the least I could do was return the favor and pretend that they were writers.”

A winner of the Lambda Literary Award for Humor, if satire and sarcasm are the keys to your heart, this is the book for you. Each essay captures a seemingly random aspect of Sedaris' life, whether his short-lived experience as an artist or his struggles with learning French from a miserable teacher. Despite their simplicity, his stories are laced with subtle mockery and a contempt that will have you grinning from ear to ear. Goodreads reviewers call it "Witty, wry, bitter, delightful." Through self-deprecation and sarcasm, he makes light of unfortunate situations and quickly becomes the favorite underdog. *Me Talk Pretty One Day* is fast, funny, engaging; everything you could want from a personal memoir and more.

If not for the humor, read for the quality of the stories. Though they may have been written to provoke a laugh, you may find that some of them have a deeper message.

Smith Roland. *Elephant Run*

England, 1941. WWII rages in the Atlantic. A bombing raid by the German air force has destroyed Nick Freestone's house. His mother, fearing for his safety, sends him to Burma, a country in Southeast Asia. Nick's father lives there on a plantation. The plantation harvests wood by using elephants and is well enough out of the way of the Japanese that he won't be in danger. Or so they thought. The Japanese take Rangoon and later, the plantation.

Nick's father is put into a forced labor camp and Nick himself is put to work for the resident Japanese who are using the house and village as a command center. After many months of work and beatings, Nick is rescued by Taung Baw, Baw's great granddaughter Mya, and a rogue bull elephant named Hannibal. The group make a harrowing journey in order to rescue Mr. Freestone, and have to evade both friend and foe alike if they are to remain undiscovered.

Will they escape? Or will their mission fail? To find out, READ!

Wertheim, John. *Scorecasting*

Almost all sports fans have crazy conspiracy theories about things like home field advantage or officials blowing calls, but almost none will find any statistical facts to prove them. *Scorecasting* by L. Jon Wertheim and Tobias Moskowitz addresses these issues (among others) and provides readers with an easily understandable analysis of them.

This book is a must-read for all sports fans or anyone interested in statistics. The authors thoroughly analyze both large-scale plays such as David Tyree's head-catch in the 2007 Super Bowl, and everyday occurrences such as the risk level of pitches thrown on a full-count.

Scorecasting made the *New York Times* best seller list and reviewer Bruce Weber called its results "...alternately irritating, vexing, provocative and entertaining — and convincing more often than not."

Overall I would rate *Scorecasting* a 9/10 and would highly recommend it to any sports fans who want to know the science behind their favorite games.

Wilson, Daniel. *Robocalypse*

In case you haven't noticed, machines are everywhere. They are in your house. They are in your car. They are in your school and in the skies...and now they're coming for you.

Robocalypse is a fast-paced (and sometimes gory) action-filled epic, a terrifying story with heart-stopping implications. In the near future all the dazzling tech that runs our world will unite when a childlike but massively powerful artificial intelligence goes live and reprograms everyday devices from cell phones to ATM machines to traffic lights to airliners. In the months leading up to this, sporadic glitches are noticed by a handful of unconnected humans – a single mother freaked out by her daughter's menacing "smart" toys, a lonely Japanese bachelor victimized by his domestic robot companion, an isolated U.S. soldier who witnesses a

'pacification unit' go haywire – but most are unaware of the growing rebellion until it is too late.

When the Robot War ignites -- Zero Hour -- humankind will be both decimated and, possibly, for the first time in history, united. Among them: a young photojournalist who escapes Boston and fights his way across the United States as the leader of a band of guerrillas known as the Brightboy squad. Takeo Nomura, a lonely technician in love with an android "love doll" named Mikiko. And Lurker, an angry hacker and phone pranker.

Wildly inventive and told as an oral history, assembled from interviews, security camera footage, and first- and secondhand testimonies, you will not be able to put it down. Fans of *Jurassic Park* or other Michael Crichton works will be thrilled. A film adaptation is already in pre-production, with Steven Spielberg in the director's chair.