

MHS English Department 2021 Summer Reading List For Students Entering Grade 9

Students entering Grade 9 College Prep A/B are **REQUIRED** to read **ONE** of the novels from the list below.

Students entering Grade 9 Honors are **REQUIRED** to read **TWO** of the novels from the list. **NOTE: AT LEAST ONE** of the student's selections **MUST** be one of the novels marked with an asterisk (*).

ALL STUDENTS ENTERING GRADE 9 ENGLISH NEXT YEAR will respond to a writing prompt on the summer reading within the first two weeks of school; therefore, it is highly recommended, but not mandatory, that students keep a reading journal to take notes on plot/plot development, characters/character development, and themes/theme development as they read. **NOTE:** Students who prepare handwritten notes will be able to use them as a reference during the assessment(s); typed notes will not be allowed.

Grade 9		
Betty Smith	<i>*A Tree Grows in Brooklyn</i>	*“...a poignant and deeply understanding story of childhood and family relationships. The Nolans lived in the Williamsburg slums of Brooklyn from 1902 until 1919...Their daughter Francie and their son Neely knew more than their fair share of the privations and sufferings that are the lot of a great city's poor. Primarily this is Francie's book. from <i>New York Times</i>
Maya Angelou	<i>*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i>	* “...this memoir traces Maya Angelou's childhood in a small, rural community during the 1930s. Filled with images and recollections that point to the dignity and courage of black men and women, Angelou paints a sometimes disquieting, but always affecting picture of the people—and the times—that touched her life. Amazon.com Review
Richard Adams	<i>*Watership Down</i>	*First published in 1972, Richard Adams's extraordinary bestseller <i>Watership Down</i> takes us to a world we have never truly seen: to the remarkable life that teems in the fields, forests, and riverbanks, far beyond our cities and towns. It is a powerful saga of courage, leadership, and survival; and epic tale of a hardy band of Berkshire rabbits forced to flee the destruction of their fragile community and their trials and triumphs in the face of extraordinary adversity as they pursue a glorious dream called "home." distributed by Syndetic Solutions, Inc.

Steve Kluger	<i>My Most Excellent Year: A Novel of Love, Mary Poppins, and Fenway Park</i>	Best friends and unofficial brothers since they were six, ninth-graders T.C. and Augie have got the world figured out. But that all changes when both friends fall in love for the first time. Enter Al, She's pretty, sassy, and on her way to Harvard. T.C. falls hard, but Al, is playing hard to get. Meanwhile, Augie realizes that he's got a crush on a boy. It's not so clear to him, but to his family and friends, it's totally obvious! Told in alternating perspectives, this is the hilarious and touching story of their most excellent year, where these three friends discover love, themselves, and how a little magic and Mary Poppins can go a long way. Amazon.com
Walter Dean Myers	<i>Sunrise over Fallujah</i>	Instead of heading to college as his father wishes, Robin leaves Harlem and joins the army to stand up for his country after 9/11. While stationed in Iraq with a war looming that he hopes will be averted, he begins writing letters home to his parents and to his Uncle Richie, the main character from Myers's acclaimed Vietnam War novel, <i>Fallen Angels</i> (Scholastic, 1988). Robin finds himself in a diverse Civil Affairs unit of both men and women, with a mission to serve as a buffer between winning over the Iraqi people and concurrent military operations. As the war unfolds, the military angle of Robin's job escalates, and he experiences increasing horrors of violence, death, destruction, insecurity, sorrow, and extreme fear. Ultimately, he comprehends the reasons Uncle Richie never wanted to talk to their family about what happened in Vietnam, saying, "-are there really enough words to make them understand?" <i>School Library Journal Review</i>
Sue Monk Kidd	<i>The Secret Life of Bees</i>	Fourteen-year-old Lily Owen, who is neglected and isolated on her father's North Carolina peach farm, becomes a runaway who finds the true meaning of family in the home of three black sisters who raise bees. The story is set in the early 1960s against the background of racial violence and unrest. Amazon.com Review

<p>Jamie Ford</p>	<p><i>Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet</i></p>	<p>Fifth-grade scholarship students and best friends Henry and Keiko are the only Asians in their Seattle elementary school in 1942. Henry is Chinese, Keiko is Japanese, and Pearl Harbor has made all Asians—even those who are American born—targets for abuse. Because Henry's nationalistic father has a deep-seated hatred for Japan, Henry keeps his friendship with and eventual love for Keiko a secret. When Keiko's family is sent to an internment camp in Idaho, Henry vows to wait for her. Library Journal Synopsis</p>
<p>Matthew Quick</p>	<p><i>Boy 21</i></p>	<p>Basketball has always been an escape for Finley. He lives in broken-down Belmont, a town ruled by the Irish mob, drugs, violence, and racially charged rivalries. At home, his dad works nights, and Finley is left to take care of his disabled grandfather alone. He's always dreamed of getting out someday, but until he can, putting on that number 21 jersey makes everything seem okay. Russ has just moved to the neighborhood, and the life of this teen basketball phenom has been turned upside down by tragedy. Cut off from everyone he knows, he won't pick up a basketball, but answers only to the name Boy21--taken from his former jersey number. As their final year of high school brings these two boys together, a unique friendship may turn out to be the answer they both need. Barnes and Noble.com Synopsis</p>
<p>Matthew Quick</p>	<p><i>Sorta Like a Rockstar</i></p>	<p>Amber Appleton lives in a bus. Ever since her mom's boyfriend kicked them out, Amber, her mom, and her totally loyal dog, Bobby Big Boy (aka Thrice B) have been camped out in the back of Hello Yellow (the school bus her mom drives). Still, Amber, the self-proclaimed princess of hope and girl of unyielding optimism, refuses to sweat the bad stuff. But when a fatal tragedy threatens Amber's optimism—and her way of life, can Amber continue to be the rock star of hope? With an oddball cast of characters, and a heartwarming, inspiring story, this novel unveils a beautifully beaten-up world of laughs, loyalty, and hard-earned hope. The world is Amber's stage, and Amber is, well...she's sorta like a rock star. True? True.</p>

		Barnes and Noble.com Synopsis
Sir Arthur Conan Doyle	<p><i>Adventures of Sherlock Holmes</i></p> <p>Click here for a link to the text via Project Gutenberg</p>	<p>The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes is a collection of twelve stories written by Arthur Conan Doyle, featuring his famous detective. Venture back in time to Victorian London to join literature's greatest detective team — the brilliant Sherlock Holmes and his devoted assistant, Dr. Watson — as they investigate a dozen of their best-known cases. Originally published in 1892, this is the first and best collection of stories about the legendary sleuth. Amazon</p>

Any student who needs assistance regarding summer reading should email the department chair, Mr. Jamie Vitonis, to schedule an appointment for support.

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