

AIM's Upper School Summer Reading 2017

*All required Upper School summer readings are available for download at <http://www.audible.com> or on Learning Ally

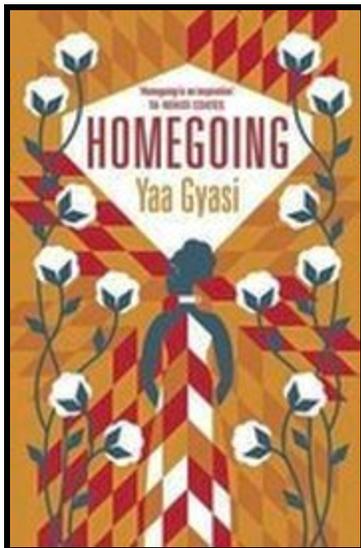
Summer reading requirements have changed slightly this year. Each Upper School student is responsible for reading a minimum of two texts this summer. The first is an all-school book that focuses on shared themes of cultural competency and social justice. These themes drive our instruction in the fall and the summer reading helps prepare students to engage in important conversations around these topics upon their return. This core text is the source of the summer writing assignment described below. These essays will make up the first grades in at least one of every student's fall classes.

In addition to this core text, students must choose one other book from the teacher recommendations listed below. In the fall, students will join 'book clubs' with the faculty member who recommended that text. Students should be prepared to discuss the book in detail and expect an assessment that holds them accountable for their reading, but there is no other written work that accompanies the second read.

Summer 2017 All Upper School Book

This summer, every student will share one core reading to help us frame important academic discussions in the fall. For the all-school book, we have selected

Homegoing, by Yaa Gyasi.



“The unforgettable tale begins with the story of two half-sisters, separated by forces beyond their control: one sold into slavery, the other married to a British slaver. Written with tremendous sweep and power, *Homegoing* traces the generations of family who follow, as their destinies lead them through two continents and three hundred years of history, each life indelibly drawn, as the legacy of slavery is fully revealed in light of the present day.

Effia and Esi are born into different villages in eighteenth-century Ghana. Effia is married off to an Englishman and lives in comfort in the palatial rooms of Cape Coast Castle. Unbeknownst to Effia, her sister, Esi, is

imprisoned beneath her in the castle's dungeons, sold with thousands of others into the Gold Coast's booming slave trade, and shipped off to America, where her children and grandchildren will be raised in slavery. One thread of Homegoing follows Effia's descendants through centuries of warfare in Ghana, as the Fante and Asante nations wrestle with the slave trade and British colonization. The other thread follows Esi and her children into America. From the plantations of the South to the Civil War and the Great Migration, from the coal mines of Pratt City, Alabama, to the jazz clubs and dope houses of twentieth-century Harlem, right up through the present day, Homegoing makes history visceral, and captures, with singular and stunning immediacy, how the memory of captivity came to be inscribed in the soul of a nation."

[Source: Penguin Random House]

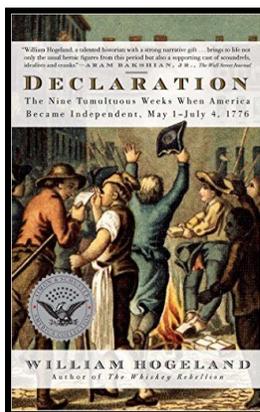
Writing Assignment:

In a two-three page essay, explore the major plots points of the novel through the lens of one of the prevailing themes: power, identity, responsibility, redemption. Discuss how this theme shapes the way in which the reader experiences the story and empathizes with the characters.

Teacher Recommendations (in Alphabetical Order)

Mr. Brandon's Summer Recommendation

Declaration by William Hogeland

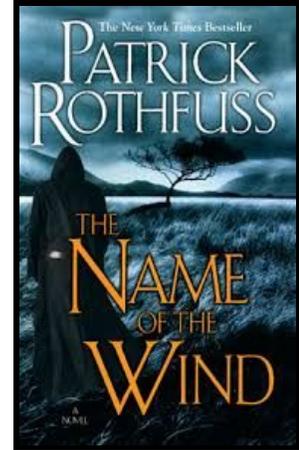


As the Continental Congress argued over whether or not to break away from England a group of activists led by Samuel and John Adams plotted to lead the country to independence by overturning the conservative government of Pennsylvania. The Adams brothers set in motion a chain of events in the Philadelphia streets, the Continental Congress, and throughout the country that would lead to the Declaration of Independence. A strange alliance of patrician politicians and rabble rousers provides lessons for important issues confronting America today. *Declaration* offers a fresh look of the events that gave birth to America.

Mr. Campbell's Summer Recommendation

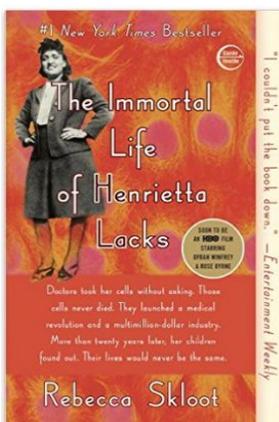
The Name of the Wind by Patrick Rothfuss

This is, quite simply, the best Fantasy novel I have read in a long time. The Name of the Wind is the first book in the Kingkiller Chronicle trilogy. It is the story of the childhood, education, and training of a boy who grew up to be a legendary hero then somehow ended up living a normal life in a quiet village. The book combines a detailed world of science and magic with an epic tale of heroism starring a foolish boy who gets into trouble and finds his way out using equal parts brains and luck. If you love The Hobbit and the Lord of the Rings, but are looking for something new and unique this is the book for you. If you were enthralled by the world of Harry Potter, but crave something darker, this is the book for you. If you are new to the Fantasy genre and want a really great introduction, this is the book for you. Be warned, this book is so good that you may feel compelled to read the sequel immediately. However, the third and final book in the trilogy is not finished and you may have to wait a while.



Ms. Cline's Summer Recommendation

The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks

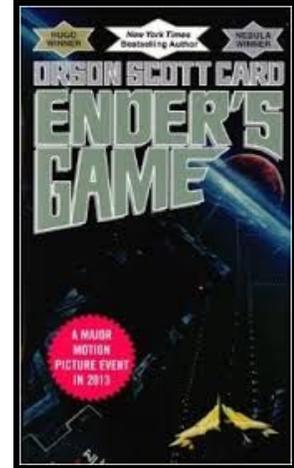


“Her name was Henrietta Lacks, but scientists know her as HeLa. She was a poor black tobacco farmer whose cells—taken without her knowledge in 1951—became one of the most important tools in medicine, vital for developing the polio vaccine, cloning, gene mapping, and more. Henrietta's cells have been bought and sold by the billions, yet she remains virtually unknown, and her family can't afford health insurance. This phenomenal New York Times bestseller tells a riveting story of the collision between ethics, race, and medicine; of scientific discovery and faith healing; and of a daughter consumed with questions about the mother she never knew.”

Ms. DeVault's Summer Recommendation

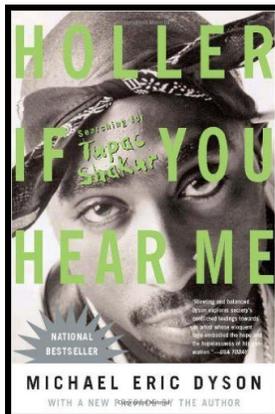
Ender's Game by Orson Scott Card

Ender's Game is a science fiction novel set far in the future by Orson Scott Card. The earth has been invaded by two alien species and a third one is on the way. Starting at a very young age, children are prepped to defend mankind. Their 'games' help rear the next generation of soldiers to defend the earth. While playing these 'games', Ender Wiggin, the title character, realizes he is a tactical genius. This novel has become a regular suggested reading for those preparing for the military. *Ender's Game* has won the Nebula Award for best novel, the Hugo Award for best novel, and has spawned a series of sequels that have become beloved works of military sci-fi by many.



Mr. Dunn's Summer Recommendation

Holler If You Hear Me by Michael Eric Dyson



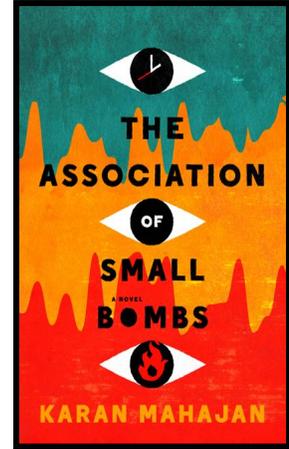
Tupac Shakur is one of the most beloved and well-known hip-hop artists the world has seen. With more than 75 million albums sold worldwide, Shakur's poetry, production, and message are known from the United States to Kenya, from Australia to Brazil. In this book, acclaimed public intellectual and Georgetown University professor Michael Eric Dyson looks critically at the life and work of Shakur. Dyson digs to uncover his message about poverty, violence, and incarceration, all while sharing an artfully crafted, musical message. Join Mr. Dunn in reading this book if you want to explore African-American culture, music, and the history of a truly American musical genre. Fair warning: You'll probably want

to go buy a couple of Tupac albums after reading this.

Ms. Gubanich's Summer Recommendation

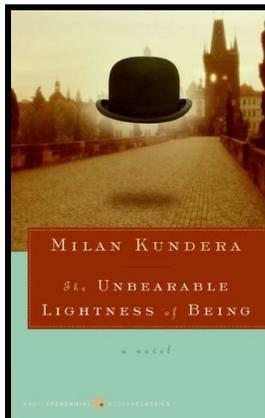
The Association of Small Bombs by Karan Mahajan

The novel opens at its plot's climactic point: the detonation of a bomb--one of the many "small" bombs that go off seemingly unheralded across the world--in a Dehli market place. The bomb claims the lives of two young brothers and sets off a chain of events that reverberate throughout the novel's entirety. Spiralling through the lives of survivors, victims, and the terrorist himself, the plot propels itself outward, like the very bomb at its center. The effect is a dizzying portrayal of a single act of terrorism and its effect on both victims and perpetrators. As Alexandra Schwartz wrote for *The New Yorker*, "Historical and sociological and political explanations, necessary as they are to making sense of terror, don't capture the tiny, intimate urgencies that power the life of a person caught in their web. Mahajan can't explain the grand structures of violence any better than the rest of us can. But he brings us close enough to feel the blast."



Mr. Herman's Summer Recommendation

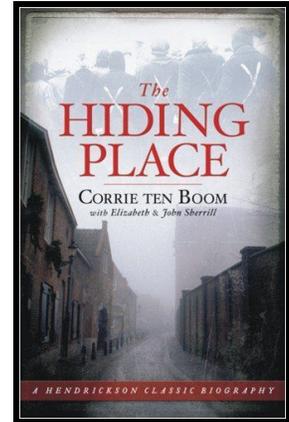
The Unbearable Lightness of Being by Milan Kundera



The story takes place in Prague in the late 1960s and early 1970s. It explores the artistic and intellectual life of Czech society from the Prague Spring of 1968 to the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Union and three other Warsaw Pact countries and its aftermath. The main characters are: Tomáš, an surgeon; his wife Tereza, a photographer; Tomáš's friend Sabina, a free-spirited artist, Franz, a Swiss university professor, and Šimon, Tomáš's estranged son. The novel is set in the backdrop of war and explores the notions of freedom, government, and fate. If you like philosophy and an easy to follow story, this is for you.

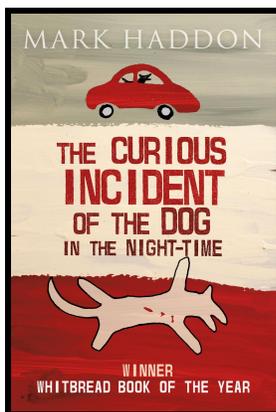
Ms. Johnston's Summer Recommendation
The Hiding Place by Corrie Ten Boom

During the 1930s, Nazi violence and hatred toward Jews in Holland increased daily. In this climate of hatred and fear, many turned their heads in grief and shame - too afraid for their own lives to save the lives of others. But despite the risk of punishment and death, Corrie Ten Boom and her family joined the Dutch resistance - helping Jews elude capture and almost certain death. When the Ten Booms were betrayed, they were plunged overnight into the brutality of Nazi Germany's concentration camps. Corrie used her Christian faith to comfort and sustain her during the dark times and has since traveled the world proclaiming one message: God's love can overcome, heal and restore.



Mr. Jones' Summer Recommendation

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time by Mark Haddon

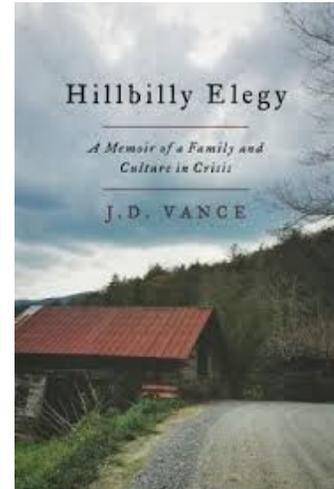


Written in the first person from the perspective of Christopher John-Francis Boone, the novel explores the life of a teenage boy with autism. Challenged by interpreting and showing emotions yet gifted in solving complex math problems, the short novel reveals a young man with both extraordinary capabilities and deficits. Christopher demonstrates these gifts and challenges as he attempts to solve the mystery of a murdered neighborhood dog. The novel is currently the One Book One Philadelphia book selection.

Mr. Korff's Summer Recommendation

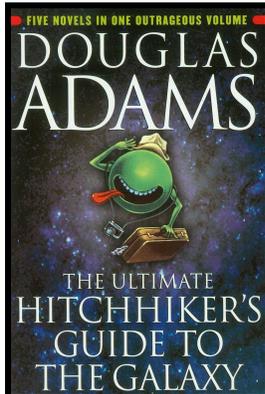
Hillbilly Elegy by J.D. Vance

Hillbilly Elegy is the story of white, working-class America, and this group's decline over the last few decades. This is a part of the country that voted heavily for Donald Trump in the 2016 election, leading the New York Times to call this book one of "6 books to help understand Trump's win." The book tells the story of the Vance family, who moved from "dirt-poor" Appalachia to Ohio, to pursue a modern middle class life. The author, the grandchild of the family, earned his law degree from Yale and in several other ways the family seemed to be successfully part of the middle class. But the Vance family struggled to escape demons like alcoholism and abuse that are common in rural poverty. This book shows how the American Dream might no longer be available to white, working-class America, and how this group has responded to this.



Mr. Kurish's Summer Recommendation

The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy by Douglas Adams

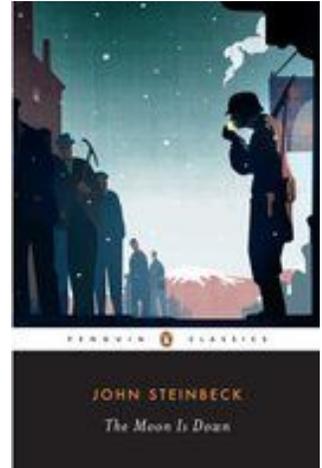


What would you do if you found out that the earth was going to be destroyed to make way for an intergalactic bypass? What could you do? You are a simple earthling, one of the least developed species in the universe. Arthur Dent finds himself in this situation. Read about his humorous journey as he follows his friend (and, it turns out, visitor from another planet) Ford Prefect on a ridiculous escapade across the galaxy in an attempt to figure out just what the heck is going on. If you like comedy, and writers with wonderful, creative imaginations, you should read this book.

Mr. McInerney's Summer Recommendation

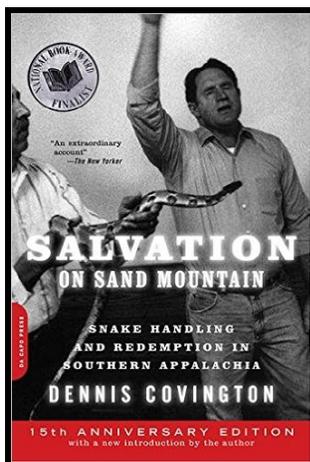
The Moon Is Down By John Steinbeck

Occupied by enemy troops, a small town comes face-to-face with evil imposed from outside and betrayal born within the close-knit community. In this masterful tale set in Norway during WWII, Steinbeck explores the effects of invasion on both the conquered and the conquerors. As he delves into the emotions of the German commander and the Norwegian traitor, and depicts the spirited patriotism of the Norwegian underground, Steinbeck uncovers profound, often unsettling truths about war and human nature. Steinbeck's "celebration of the durability of democracy" had an extraordinary impact as Allied propaganda in Nazi-occupied Europe. Despite efforts to suppress it (in Italy and Germany, possession of the book was punishable by death), *The Moon Is Down* was secretly translated into dozens of languages and circulated throughout Europe, making it by far the most popular piece of propaganda under the occupation of Europe of Fascist control.



Mr. Murphy's Summer Recommendation

Salvation on Sand Mountain: Snake Handling and Redemption in Southern Appalachia
by Dennis Covington

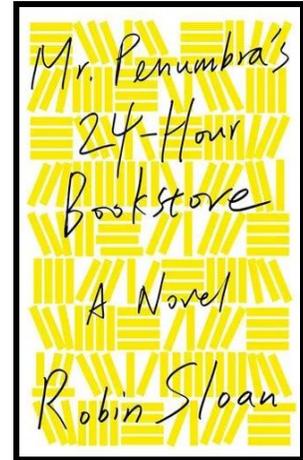


Though non-fiction – a true story – elements of Covington's work ring false to most readers. It begins with snake handling and speaking in tongues. As Covington investigates a sensational murder case, he finds much more than he expected in a small, devout community in Southern Appalachia: true friends, a sense of purpose in a decidedly strange world and, most unexpectedly, faith. A mixture of memoir, true crime, and travel journal, *Salvation on Sand Mountain* is an earnest account of finding a place for the unexplainable in the modern world. Beyond that, it's a fascinating glimpse into obscure practices and a riveting read.

Ms. Nathan's Summer Recommendation

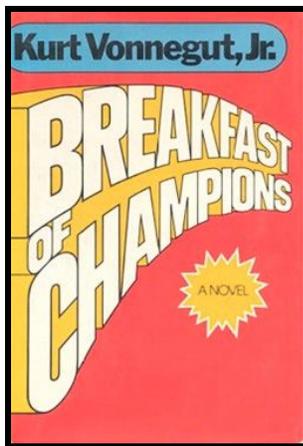
Mr. Penumbra's 24-hour Bookstore, By Robin Sloane

In the curious 24-hour bookstore, customers never seem to buy anything. Rather, they “check out” mysterious, encoded volumes with seeming urgency. Clay Jannon, an out-of-work web designer who has begun working overnights at Mr. Penumbra's, sets out to solve the mysteries of these eclectic customers and the secret society that bridges the gap between medieval texts and the modern superpowers of the Google machine. How is the past still relevant in the present? This text explores the tension between digital and print reading, all while embracing a motley crew of fascinating characters on a mission to decode the impossible.



Ms. Rock's Summer Recommendation

Breakfast of Champions By Kurt Vonnegut



In *Breakfast of Champions*, one of Kurt Vonnegut's most beloved characters, aging writer Kilgore Trout finds to his horror that a Midwest car dealer is taking his fiction as truth. What follows is murderously funny satire, as Vonnegut looks at war, sex, racism, success, politics, and pollution in America and reminds us how to see the truth. The novel provides frantic, scattershot satire and a collage of Vonnegut's obsessions. Written during a time when America was fracturing because of differing opinions on Watergate, Vietnam, and other important social and political issues, this novel suggests that artistic endeavors can make sense out of a fragmented world.

Vonnegut wrote *Breakfast of Champions* after his masterpiece *Slaughterhouse Five* and contains similar concerns about free will, alienation, and the quest for meaning in modern life.