

STONINGTON HIGH SCHOOL SUMMER READING LIST 2011

Students must read any two books from the attached list of books for summer reading. The 2011 summer reading list has been developed by the SHS staff, providing topics of interest from the Humanities, Fine & Applied Arts, and STEM. Titles are listed below, each with a blurb about the book and why the department recommends it, much in the style of “staff picks” in a bookstore. The first title on the list is the *One Book, One Region* selection, for which there will be many activities and book talks with the author on September 12th. Students will be able to earn extra credit by attending activities to further their understanding of the novel in the fall.

Directions: For each of the books, students are asked to copy two brief passages of significance to them (3 to 5 sentences) onto index cards- one passage from the beginning and one from the end of the book. The cards should include the student’s name, grade, the book title and the author. Students will be required to bring these cards to school during the first week back and will have a chance to discuss their reading in a book-talk discussion group. Students will receive a “pass” or “fail” grade based on their having read two books, copied the passages, and taken part in the book discussion. *The Summer Reading List will be available on the SHS Website.*

Exception: Students who are enrolled in an AP course in the fall of 2011 must read the *One Book, One Region* selection, *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* by Jonathan Safran Foer. They will have one book, instead of two, due to the additional reading for the AP summer work.

ONE BOOK, ONE REGION SELECTION

***Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* by Jonathan Safran Foer**

A new novel by the author of *Everything Is Illuminated* introduces Oskar Schell, the nine-year-old son of a man killed in the World Trade Center bombing who searches the city for a lock that fits a black key his father left behind.

ART DEPARTMENT

***Provenance* by Laney Salisbury**

Recounts the activities of John Drewe, who manipulated struggling artist John Myatt and other unwitting accomplices to become prolific art forgers whose works Drewe successfully passed off as legitimate pieces that still adorn private collections, large galleries, and prestigious museums.

***Devil in the White City* by Eric Larson**

A compelling account of the Chicago World's Fair of 1893 brings together the divergent stories of two very different men who played a key role in shaping the history of the event--visionary architect Daniel H. Burnham, who coordinated its construction, and Dr. Henry H. Holmes, an insatiable and charming serial killer who lured women to their deaths.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

***My Losing Season* by Pat Conroy**

The author reflects on the place of sports in his life, describing his love of basketball, the role of the athlete for young men searching for their own identity, his education at the Citadel, and his journey to best-selling writer.

***Bleachers* by John Grisham**

This is a nostalgic novel about high school football in a small Texas town, a place in which football has become a religion.

***The Last Best League: One Summer, One Season, One Dream* by Jim Collins**

The author showcases the Cape Cod amateur league baseball teams that produce one sixth of all major league players, focusing on a single season of play wherein the drama of America's pastime is played out on a much smaller scale.

BUSINESS DEPARTMENT

***Outliers* by Malcolm Gladwell**

Identifies the qualities of successful people, posing theories about the cultural, family, and idiosyncratic factors that shape high achievers, in a resource that covers such topics as the secrets of software billionaires and why the Beatles earned their fame.

***Blink* by Malcolm Gladwell**

Explores the process by which people make decisions, explaining how the difference between good and bad decision making is directly related to the details on which people focus, and offers advice on how to improve decision making skills.

***The Tipping Point* by Malcom Gladwell**

An introduction to the Tipping Point theory--first presented in a series of articles in "The New Yorker"--explains how minor changes in ideas and products can increase their popularity and how small adjustments in one's immediate environment can alter group behavior. By exposing the importance of the "tipping point" in human affairs--that moment when a trend, idea, or social behavior crosses the threshold into acceptability--the author sheds important light on the forces that drive group dynamics and mass culture.

***Please Stop Laughing at Me* by Jodee Blanco**

The author shares the cruelty that was heaped on her by her classmates when she was labeled a freak in high school, describing what it meant to be an outcast among one's peers and her struggle to overcome the torment.

***Teacher Man* by Frank McCourt**

The author describes his coming of age as a teacher, storyteller, and writer, a personal journey during which he spent fifteen years finding his voice in the classroom, and came to terms with the undervalued importance of teaching.

MUSIC DEPARTMENT

***High Fidelity* by Nick Hornby**

The English thirty-something narrator runs a London record store. He sells albums recorded the old-fashioned way--on vinyl--and is having a tough time making other transitions as well, specifically into adulthood. The book is in one sense a love story, both sweet and interesting; most entertaining, though, are the hilarious arguments over arcane matters of pop music.

***If I Stay* by Gayle Forman**

The main character is a senior in high school and a serious cellist and her boyfriend is the front man for an up and coming punk band in Seattle. A tragedy occurs at the beginning and she spends the rest of the book making a life or death decision.

***Music of the Heart* by Roberta Guaspari**

It is about a violin teacher in inner city NY and the impact that she and her students have on each other.

***The Cellist of Sarajevo* by Steven Galloway**

This serious book is set in war-torn Sarajevo. It is about a cellist who plays in the square each day, despite the war going on around him.

***A Freewheelin' Time* by Suze Rotolo**

Written by Bob Dylan's girlfriend, this book recounts the Greenwich village music scene in the 60s.

***Chronicles* (Biography) Bob Dylan**

An autobiographical portrait of the acclaimed musical performer recounts personal and professional experiences.

Room Full of Mirrors (Biography) Jimi Hendrix

Meticulously researched and based on more than three-hundred interviews with those who knew him best, a landmark book recounts the entire arc of the guitar legend's life, from his troubled childhood in Seattle's projects to his struggles against racial prejudice as a young musician and his rapid ascent to the top amidst the swinging London scene, and finally to headlining Woodstock in 1969 and his death a year later.

The Rest is Noise by Alex Ross

Deals with how to listen to 20th century music. A colorful history of modern music is set against the backdrop of the events, personalities, social institutions, and cultural movements of the twentieth century, chronicling the evolution of mass culture and mass politics, technological innovation, revolution, social experiments, and more in terms of the music of the era.

This is Your Brain on Music by Danile Levitin

A scientific exploration of the relationship between the mind and music draws on recent findings in the fields of neuroscience and evolutionary psychology to discuss such topics as the sources of musical tastes, the brain's discernible responses to music, and the cultural origins of musical senses.

HISTORY DEPARTMENT

City of Thieves by David Benioff

This recounts one transformative week in the life of two teenage soldiers. Set during WWII in St Petersburg, the story line is very captivating. This was the One Book, One Region Selection for CT in 2009.

Black Sea by Neal Ascherson

An entertaining, compelling history of the legendary Black Sea, meeting point of Europe and Asia, documents the confrontations among Greeks, Turks, Russians, and other peoples that shaped the region's cultures, languages, and national identities.

Napoleon's Glands and Other Ventures in Biohistory by Arno Karlen

Employing a new method of examining our past which integrates medical, behavioral, and environmental sciences, the author journeys through biohistory to question the physical forces influencing celebrated people and phenomena of history

The Road to Ubar by Nicholas Clapp

A documentary filmmaker describes in a thorough and often humorous fashion his and his team's successful search for the ancient lost city of Ubar, an ancient city of Arabia supposedly destroyed by God for the sins of its people and lost for centuries in the Arabian desert. Clapp, a modern version of Indiana Jones, used the Space Shuttle in the place of a whip and a team of scientists instead of Sallah in his successful search for a city that had been lost for almost 2000 years.

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime by Mark Haddon

Despite his overwhelming fear of interacting with people, Christopher, a mathematically-gifted, autistic fifteen-year-old boy, decides to investigate the murder of a neighbor's dog and uncovers secret information about his mother.

The Help by Kathryn Stockett

In Jackson, Mississippi, in 1962, there are lines that are not crossed. With the civil rights movement exploding all around them, three women start a movement of their own, forever changing a town and the way women--black and white, mothers and daughters--view one another.

Summer Sisters by Judy Blume

Two women from very different backgrounds become inseparable companions during summers on Martha's Vinyard during their coming-of-age years, forging the bonds of a lifelong friendship that weathers growing up, marriage, children, careers and betrayal. (mature students)

***The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak**

Living with a foster family in Germany during World War II, a young girl struggles to survive her day-to-day trials through stealing anything she can get her hands on, but when she discovers the beauty of literature, she realizes that she has been blessed with a gift that must be shared with others, including the Jewish man hiding in the basement.

***The Wanderer* by Sharon Creech**

Thirteen-year-old Sophie's journey across the vast ocean with her uncles and two cousins teaches her a great deal about herself and the family she loves.

***House Rules* by Jodi Piccolt**

Unable to express himself socially but possessing a savant-like knack for investigating crimes, a teenage boy with Asperger's Syndrome is wrongly accused of killing his tutor when the police mistake his autistic tics for guilty behavior.

***The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan**

Encompassing two generations and a rich blend of Chinese and American history, the story of four struggling, strong women also reveals their daughters' memories and feelings

***Empire Falls* by Richard Russo**

Milo Roby tries to hold his family together while working at the Empire Grill in the once-successful logging town of Empire Falls, Maine, with his partner, Mrs. Whiting, who is the heir to a faded logging and textile legacy.

***Autobiography of a Face* by Lucy Grealy (memoir)**

The author, who endured a severely disfiguring cancer in childhood, offers a meditation on the pain, and healing she has endured, searching through a culture obsessed with physical beauty for love, acceptance, and inner peace

***Bel Canto* by Ann Patchett**

When terrorists seize hostages at an embassy party, an unlikely assortment of people is thrown together, including American opera star Roxanne Coss, and Mr. Hosokawa, a Japanese CEO and her biggest fan.

***The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie**

Leaving the Spokane Indian Reservation to attend an all-white high school where the only other Indian is the school mascot, Junior struggles to find his place in his new surroundings in order to escape his destiny back on the reservation.

***The Story of Edgar Sawtelle* by David Wroblewski**

Born without the ability to speak, Edgar Sawtelle grows up on a Wisconsin farm turned dog breeding and training kennel with his parents, using sign and gesture to aid the pursuit of perfecting canine companionship. Then, in an injection of Hamlet that one can almost map out point for point, the Sawtelle dream is poisoned. There is the murderous uncle who woos the widowed mother, a ghostly apparition of Edgar's father warning the boy of something rotten, and, most cleverly, a canine reenactment of the deadly deed before Edgar sets out into the wilderness with a trio of young pups.

***Jewel* by Brett Lott**

A mother fights for the dignity of her youngest daughter against the backdrop of a pure and simple way of life in the backwoods of Mississippi in 1943.

***Love Medicine* by Louise Erdrich**

This is a collection of interrelated stories of love, betrayal, mystery, and madness concerns men and women bound by blood, legend, tradition, and need. The lives and destinies of two Native American families--the Kashpaws and the Lamartines--intertwine on and around a North Dakota Indian reservation from 1934 to 1984, in a tale of survival, tenacity, tradition, injustice, and love..

***My Most Excellent Year* by Steve Kluger**

Three teenagers in Boston narrate their experiences of a year of new friendships, first loves, and coming into their own. While T.C. tries to get Alejandra to fall in love with him, Alejandra struggles with the pressures of being the daughter of a diplomat, in an amusing young adult reader about life, love, family, and friendship.

***The Declaration* by Gemma Malley**

After being interrogated by the Department of Homeland Security after a terrorist attack on San Francisco, California, seventeen-year-old Marcus, released into what is now a police state, uses his expertise in computer hacking to set things right.

***Little Brother* by Cory Doctorow**

After being interrogated by the Department of Homeland Security after a terrorist attack on San Francisco, California, seventeen-year-old Marcus, released into what is now a police state, uses his expertise in computer hacking to set things right.

***Will Grayson, Will Grayson* by John Green & David Levithan**

When two teens, one gay and one straight, meet and discover that they share the same name, their lives become intertwined as one begins dating the other's best friend, who produces a play revealing his relationship with them both.

***Matched* by Allyson Braithwaite Condie**

Cassia has always trusted the Society to make the right choices for her, so when Xander appears on-screen at her Matching ceremony, Cassia knows he is her ideal mate--until Ky Markham's face appears for an instant before the screen fades to black.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND MATH DEPARTMENTS

***Einstein's Dreams* by Alan Lightman.**

A fictional recreation of Einstein's discovery of the nature of time follows the young Albert through 1905 Bern, Switzerland, as he sorts through the dreams that have persisted in his mind for several months.

***My Sister's Keeper* by Jodi Picoult**

Conceived to provide a bone marrow match for her leukemia-stricken sister, a teenage Kate begins to question her moral obligations in light of countless medical procedures and ultimately decides to fight for the right to make decisions about her own body.

***Darwins Radio* by Greg Bear**

All the best thrillers contain the solution to a mystery, and the mystery in this intellectually sparkling scientific thriller is more crucial and stranger than most. Why are people turning against their neighbors and their newborn children? And what is causing an epidemic of still births? A disgraced paleontologist and a genetic engineer both come across evidence of cover-ups in which the government is clearly up to no good. But no one knows what's really going on, and the government is covering up because that is what, in thrillers as in life, governments do. And what has any of this to do with the discovery of a Neanderthal family whose mummified faces show signs of a strange peeling?

***Dead Men Do Tell Tales, The Strange and Fascinating Cases of a Forensic Anthropologist* by Michael Browning.**

From a skeleton, a skull, a mere fragment of burnt thighbone, Dr. William Maples can deduce the age, gender, and ethnicity of a murder victim, the manner in which the person was dispatched, and, ultimately, the identity of the killer. In *Dead Men Do Tell Tales*, Dr. Maples revisits his strangest, most interesting, and most horrific investigations, from the baffling cases of conquistador Francisco Pizarro and Vietnam MIAs to the mysterious deaths of President Zachary Taylor and the family of Czar Nicholas II.

***The Hot Zone* By Richard Preston.**

This is the dramatic and chilling story of an Ebola virus outbreak in a suburban Washington, D.C. laboratory, with descriptions of frightening historical epidemics of rare and lethal viruses. More hair-raising than anything Hollywood could think of, because it's all true.

WORLD LANGUAGE

***A Year in Provence* by Peter Mayle**

The author describes his experiences when he and his wife moved to a two-hundred-year-old French farmhouse, and shares his observations on the people and culture of Provence.

***Breath, Eyes, Memory* by Edwidge Danticat**

Leaving her native Haiti, young Sophie journeys to New York, where she grows up and marries, always tormented by her Haitian past and other problems, problems that lead her to a Santeria exorcism.

***Suite Francaise* by Irene Nemirovsky (translated from the original French)**

Published more than sixty years following the author's death at Auschwitz, a remarkable story of life under the Nazi occupation includes two parts--"A Storm in June," set amid the chaotic 1940 exodus from Paris on the eve of the Nazi invasion, and "Dolce," set in a German-occupied provincial village rife with jealousy, resentment, resistance, and collaboration.

BIOGRAPHY

***Schulz and Peanuts* by David Michaelis**

A portrait of the late creator of the "Peanuts" comic strip evaluates how his career was shaped by his midwestern working-class origins, family losses, and wartime experiences, offering insight into how familiar storylines closely reflected Schulz's private life.

***Moving the Chains: Tom Brady and the Pursuit of Everything* by Charles P. Pierce**

Chronicles NFL quarterback Tom Brady's rise to the top of his profession and examines how he stays there in this study of highly honed skills, discipline, and making the most of good fortune.

***Slave: My True Story* By Mende Nazer and Damien Lewis**

Nazer was about 12 when raiders burned her Nuba village, killed the adults, and took 31 young children, who were sold in Sudan's capital Khartoum. She tells of her years in slavery, her flight after seven years, and her attainment of asylum in Britain.

***Thinking in Pictures: And Other Reports from My Life with Autism* by Temple Grandin**

Celebrated for her unique empathy with animals, Grandin describes her life with autism and how she has used her strong visual sensibility to cope with it. The animal scientist describes how she and other victims of autism perceive the world, and relates the ways in which she has been able to adapt and have a successful career

***Stick Figure: A Diary of My Former Self* by Lori Gottlieb**

Based on diaries written in 1978, when she was eleven years old, the author offers a chronicle of her battle with anorexia and the pressures from family, peers, and society that led her to starve herself

***Born on a Blue Day* by Danie Tammet**

Traces the inspiring story of an autistic savant with genius-level mathematical talents, describing how he was eschewed by his classmates in spite of his near-photographic memory and super-human capacity for math and language, in a firsthand account that offers insight into how he experiences the world.

***Shoot an Iraqi: Art Life and Resistance Under the Gun* by Wafaa Bilal and Kari Lydersen**

The creator of "Domestic Tension," an unsettling interactive performance piece that speaks to the horrors of life in a conflict zone, reveals his experiences growing up under Saddam Hussein's rule.

***God Grew Tired of Us: A Memoir* John Buldau with Michael S. Sweeney**

The harrowing consequences and horrors of the Sudanese civil war come to life in an inspirational, eyewitness account that describes one man's experiences, from the terror and violence of his homeland, to his tortuous escape, to the culture shock he experienced as he struggled to adjust to a new life in America.

NONFICTION

***Theater Geek: (The Real Life Drama of a Summer at Stagedoor Manor, the Famous Performing Arts Camp)* by Mickey Rapkin**

This book follows three teen actors through the ups and downs of a session at Stagedoor Manor, a renowned theater camp in the Catskills with such noted alumni as Robert Downey, Jr., Natalie Portman, Zach Braff, and Jennifer Jason Leigh.

***Fishing Out of Stonington: Voices of the Fishing Families of Stonington, Connecticut* Edited by Fred Calabretta; Introduction by Glenn S. Gordinier; and Conclusion by John Odin Jensen**

Mystic Seaport has documented the Stonington fishing industry with oral history interviews and photography to offer a glimpse of life in Connecticut's principal fishing port.

***Terror on the Seas: True Tales of Modern-Day Pirates* by Daniel Sekulich**

An assessment of modern piracy links multi-national, lucrative operations by organized crime syndicates and local warlords to current threats in national security and the War on Terror, in an account that also reveals the role of piracy in environmental hazards, economic problems, and jihad activities.

SUGGESTIONS FROM THE 2011 GRADUATING CLASS

***The Glass Castle* – by Jeannette Walls** the child of a scholarly, alcoholic father and an eccentric artist mother discusses her family's nomadic upbringing--from the Arizona desert to Las Vegas to Appalachia--during which her siblings and she fended for themselves while their parents outmaneuvered bill collectors and the authorities.

***The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky**

In this thought-provoking novel, Charlie struggles to cope with the complex world of high school as he deals with the confusions of sex and love, the temptations of drugs, and the pain of losing a close friend and a favorite aunt.

***The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath**

Esther Greenwood, a talented and successful writer, finally succumbs to madness when the world around her begins to falter.

***The Hunger Games (1st of series)* – by Suzanne Collins**

In a future North America, where the rulers of Panem maintain control through an annual televised survival competition pitting young people from each of the twelve districts against one another, sixteen-year-old Katniss's skills are put to the test when she voluntarily takes her younger sister's place.

***Black Dogs* by Ian McEwan**

Writing a memoir of his parents-in-law, Jeremy describes how June and Bernhard Iremaine met, fell in love, and committed themselves to the Communist party, in a narrative that spans from post-World War II to the present.

***The Last Lecture* by Randy Pausch**

The author, a computer science professor diagnosed with terminal cancer, explores his life, the lessons that he has learned, how he has worked to achieve his childhood dreams, and the effect of his diagnosis on him and his family.

***Gods and Generals* by Jeff Shaara**

The lives and careers of four great military leaders--Stonewall Jackson, Winfield Scott Hancock, Joshua Chamberlain, and Robert E. Lee--reach a climax as Union and Confederate forces clash on the battlefields of the Civil War

***A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini**

Two women, born a generation apart, witness the destruction of their home and family in wartorn Kabul, incurring losses over the course of thirty years that test the limits of their strength and courage.

***Mountains Beyond Mountains* by Tracy Kidder**

A thought-provoking portrait of world-renowned infectious disease expert Dr. Paul Farmer follows the efforts of this unconventional Harvard genius to understand the world's great health, economic, and social problems and to bring healing to humankind.