



2021-2022 SUMMER READING LIST

Sara Yeager, Dean of Academics and Faculty | 860-386-4428 | syeager@suffieldacademy.org | suffieldacademy.org/academics

FOR ALL QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT: SARA YEAGER / [SYEAGER@SUFFIELDACADEMY.ORG](mailto:syeager@suffieldacademy.org)

The Summer Reading Program at Suffield Academy reflects several important aims. First, we want to encourage our students to read outside of the classroom and beyond the school year. Additionally, we value the shared experience of all faculty and students reading a common text. Students should annotate their books as they read and expect to write and discuss the selections during the first few weeks of fall term. At a minimum, students must read the community text and choose one book from the reading list. However, students are encouraged to read throughout the summer and urged to choose two books from the reading list.

COMMUNITY TEXT ALL GRADES

Penguin the Magpie: The Odd Little Bird who Saved a Family (aka *Penguin Bloom: The Odd Little Bird who Saved a Family*) by Cameron Bloom

After navigating a global pandemic which impacted so many lives, we have chosen hope as our theme for academic year 2021-2022 and will read Cameron Bloom's *Penguin the Magpie: The Odd Little Bird who Saved a Family* (aka *Penguin Bloom: The Odd Little Bird who Saved a Family*). Hope is an optimistic state of mind based on the expectation of good things to come. It helps us define what we want in our future and aides in our ability to stay calm and peaceful during challenging times. To have hope is to want an outcome that makes your life better in some way. It is part of our dreams about our lives we have running in our heads. Everyone hopes for something, and we will follow Cameron Bloom's lead in using hope to persevere through his family's challenges with inspiration from his photographs and a magpie.

SUMMER READING LIST 2021 ONE REQUIRED FOR ALL GRADES

A Short History of Nearly Everything | Bill Bryson

In this book, Bryson confronts his greatest challenge: to understand—and, if possible, answer—the oldest, biggest questions we have posed about the universe and ourselves. Taking as territory everything from the Big Bang to the rise of civilization, Bryson seeks to understand how we got from there being nothing at all to there being us. To that end, he has attached himself to a host of the world's most advanced [and often obsessed] archaeologists, anthropologists, and mathematicians, travelling to their offices, laboratories, and field camps. He has read [or tried to read] their books, pestered them with questions, and apprenticed himself to their powerful minds. *A Short History of Nearly Everything* is the record of this quest, and it is a sometimes profound, sometimes funny, and always supremely clear and entertaining adventure in the realms of human knowledge, as only Bill Bryson can render it. Science has never been more involving or entertaining.

A Visit from the Goon Squad | Jennifer Egan

Bennie is an aging former punk rocker and record executive. Sasha is the passionate, troubled young woman he employs. Here Jennifer Egan brilliantly reveals their pasts, along with the inner lives of a host of other characters whose paths intersect with theirs. With music pulsing on every page, *A Visit from the Goon Squad* is a startling, exhilarating novel of self-destruction and redemption.

Becoming | Michelle Obama

Becoming is an intimate, powerful, and inspiring memoir written by the former First Lady, Michelle Obama. In *Becoming*, Obama details her life through masterful storytelling and encourages readers to never stop growing, learning, and stretching. Through sharing her own stories, Obama hopes to help others find their voice "to widen the pathway for who belongs and why."

***The Death of Expertise: The Campaign against Established Knowledge and Why it Matters* | Tom Nichols**

Thanks to technological advances and increasing levels of education, we have access to more information than ever before. Yet rather than ushering in a new era of enlightenment, the information age has helped fuel a surge in narcissistic and misguided intellectual egalitarianism that has crippled informed debate on any number of issues. Today, everyone knows everything. With only a quick trip through WebMD or Wikipedia, average citizens believe themselves to be on an equal intellectual footing with doctors and diplomats. All voices, even the most ridiculous, demand to be taken with equal seriousness and any claim to the contrary is dismissed as undemocratic elitism.

***The 57 Bus* | Dashka Slater**

If it weren't for the 57 bus, Sasha and Richard never would have met. Both were high school students from Oakland, California, one of the most diverse cities in the country, but they inhabited different worlds. Sasha, a white teen, lived in the middle-class foothills and attended a small private school. Richard, a black teen, lived in the crime-plagued flatlands and attended a large public one. Each day, their paths overlapped for a mere eight minutes. But one afternoon on the bus ride home from school, a single reckless act left Sasha severely burned and Richard charged with two hate crimes and facing life imprisonment. The case garnered international attention, thrusting both teenagers into the spotlight.

***The Fire Next Time* | James Baldwin**

Although written nearly 60 years ago, these two essays by Baldwin maintain incredible relevance in the conversation around race in America today. It pushes readers to address the legacy of racism in the United States in a provoking and prescient way. Described by *The New York Times Book Reviews* as “sermon, ultimatum, confession, deposition, testament, and chronicle...all presented in searing, brilliant prose,” *The Fire Next Time* stands as a classic of literature.

***Fruit of the Drunken Tree* | Ingrid Rojas Contreras**

This book was inspired by the author's own childhood growing up in Bogotá, Colombia during the 1990s. It is a coming-of-age story that contrasts the experiences between two young girls with vastly different socioeconomic backgrounds—Petrona, a young maid from the slums and the girl she works for, Chula. It is written in English but has Spanish in it. It has elements of magical realism and is a beautifully told story, albeit a difficult one.

***Heart of Fire: An Immigrant Daughter's Story* | Maizie Hirono**

In this autobiography, Senator Maizie Hirono describes being raised on a rice farm in rural Japan. She was seven years old when her mother Laura left her abusive husband and sailed with her two elder children to Hawaii, crossing the Pacific in steerage in search of a better life. Though the girl then known as “Keiko” did not speak or read English when she entered first grade, she would go on to serve as a state representative and as Hawaii's lieutenant governor before winning election to Congress in 2006.

***Homegoing* | Yaa Gyasi**

One of Oprah's Best “Books of the Year” and a PEN/Hemingway award winner, *Homegoing* follows the parallel paths of these sisters and their descendants through eight generations—from the Gold Coast to the plantations of Mississippi, from the American Civil War to Jazz Age Harlem. Yaa Gyasi's extraordinary novel illuminates slavery's troubled legacy both for those who were taken and those who stayed, showing how the memory of captivity has been inscribed on the soul of our nation.

***The House in the Cerulean Sea* | TJ Klune**

Linus Baker is a by-the-book case worker in the Department in Charge of Magical Youth. He's tasked with determining whether six dangerous magical children are likely to bring about the end of the world. Arthur Parnassus is the master of the orphanage. He would do anything to keep the children safe, even if it means the world will burn. And his secrets will come to light. *The House in the Cerulean Sea* is an enchanting love story, masterfully told, about the profound experience of discovering an unlikely family in an unexpected place and realizing that family is yours.

***HumanKind: Changing the World One Small Act at a Time* | Brad Aronson**

HumanKind is a heart-warming, feel-good book. The author's life changed in an instant when his wife became ill. Throughout his wife's illness, Brad met many people who shared kindness with his family. He began writing about the people who helped his family through some challenging days. In *HumanKind*, you meet many of those who made a difference in his life. You will discover how sharing a meal with someone or offering encouragement to another can make a difference in a life. This book will touch your heart and you will be reminded of what matters.

***Humans* | Brandon Stanton**

Brandon Stanton created *Humans of New York* in 2010. What began as a photographic census of life in New York City soon evolved into a storytelling phenomenon. A global audience of millions began following HONY daily. Over the next several years, Stanton broadened his lens to include people from across the world. The faces and locations will vary from page to page, but the stories will feel deeply familiar. Told with candor and intimacy, *Humans* will resonate with readers across the globe providing a portrait of our shared experience.

***Interior Chinatown* | Charles Yu**

Get on board and enjoy reading Charles Yu's satiric novel *Interior Chinatown*. This satiric novel about typecasting and racism in Hollywood won the National Book Award for Fiction in November 2020. Another interesting thing about the novel is the way Yu creates the story in the format of a screenplay. Besides writing books, he has written for several television shows including *Westworld*, *Legion*, and *Lodge 49*, which is an homage to the novella *The Crying of Lot 49*. Charles Yu was also awarded the 5 Under 35 Prize by the National Book Foundation, which every year asks prizewinning writers to distinguish "young, debut fiction writers whose work promises to leave a lasting impression on the literary landscape."

***Lake Success* | Gary Shteyngart**

The story of a New York hedge fund manager who has a mental breakdown and tries to recreate his past by traveling across the country to be with his college girlfriend. The book has allusions to Fitzgerald as well as exploring the meaning of success.

***Life in the Studio: Inspirations and Lessons in Creativity* | Frances Palmer**

A renowned potter, an entrepreneur, a gardener, photographer, cook, and beekeeper, Palmer has over the course of three decades caught the attention not only of the countless people who collect and use her ceramics but also of designers and design lovers, writers, and fellow artists who marvel at her example. Now, in her first book, she finally tells her story in her own words and images, distilling from her experiences lessons that will inspire a new generation of makers and entrepreneurs.

***Man's Search for Meaning* | Victor Frankl**

In this classic book an Austrian psychiatrist survives the Nazi concentration camps and describes the aftermath of the psychological turmoil and the revelation of life's meaning and the values that it emphasizes.

***Materiality* | Edited by Petra Lange-Berndt**

This series of essays consider recent artistic and critical approaches to materiality, focusing on the moments when materials become willful actors and agents within artistic processes. Materiality has reappeared as a highly contested topic in recent art. Modernist criticism tended to privilege form over matter—considering material as the essential basis of medium specificity—and technically based approaches in art history reinforced connoisseurship through the science of artistic materials. But in order to engage critically with the meaning, for example, of hair in David Hammons's installations, milk in the work of Dieter Roth, or latex in the sculptures of Eva Hesse, we need a very different set of methodological tools. This anthology focuses on the moments when materials become willful actors and agents within artistic processes, entangling their audience in a web of connections. It investigates the role of materiality in art that attempts to expand notions of time, space, process, or participation.

The Psychology of Money | Morgan Housel

Doing well with money isn't necessarily about what you know. It's about how you behave. And behavior is hard to teach, even to really smart people. Money—investing, personal finance, and business decisions—is typically taught as a math-based field, where data and formulas tell us exactly what to do. But in the real world people don't make financial decisions on a spreadsheet. They make them at the dinner table or in a meeting room, where personal history, your own unique view of the world, ego, pride, marketing, and odd incentives are scrambled together. In *The Psychology of Money*, award-winning author Morgan Housel shares 19 short stories exploring the strange ways people think about money and teaches you how to make better sense of one of life's most important topics.

The Psychopath Test | Jon Ronsen

BEST FOR UPPERCLASSMEN: IN THE CONTEXT OF EXPLAINING THE MENTAL PROCESSES INVOLVED IN PSYCHOPATHY, THIS SELECTION CONTAINS REFERENCES TO VIOLENT ACTIONS, INCLUDING WAR CRIMES AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE.

The Psychopath Test chronicles journalist Jon Ronsen's exploration in the world of mental health as he learns how modern psychiatry categorizes, identifies, and ultimately manages psychopaths. Along the way, he learns of a series of tools used to identify psychopaths, which he attempts to apply to several prominent figures, ranging from a leader of a political death squad to prominent American CEOs. Along the way, Ronsen begins to develop an understanding of just how common and difficult to diagnose psychopathy can be, and questions how much of American culture has been shaped by a personality disorder.

Severance | Ling Ma

This is a fun zombie/apocalypse novel that has an interesting take on society in an increasingly detached world. It is the story of Candace Chen, a millennial and first-generation Chinese American toiling away in her Manhattan publishing job and dealing with her family while a mysterious disease is ravishing the city.

The Strenuous Life: Theodore Roosevelt and the Making of the American Athlete | Ryan Swanson

In full and intricate detail, featuring an amazing cast of characters from the worlds of politics, athletics, entertainment, and more, this is the story of how President Theodore Roosevelt helped shepherd in a sports and fitness revolution that forever changed the complexion of the United States.

Think Like a Freak | Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dunbar

The *New York Times* bestselling *Freakonomics* changed the way we see the world, exposing the hidden side of just about everything. Now, with their trademark blend of captivating storytelling and unconventional analysis, Levitt and Dunbar take us inside their thought process and teach us all to think a bit more productively, more creatively, more rationally—to think, that is, like a Freak. Levitt and Dunbar offer a blueprint for an entirely new way to solve problems, whether your interest lies in minor life hacks or major global reforms. As always, no topic is off-limits. They range from business to philanthropy to sports to politics, all with the goal of retraining your brain. Levitt and Dunbar plainly see the world like no one else. Never before have such [unique] thinkers been so revealing—and so much fun to read.

This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. Climate | Naomi Klein

In *This Changes Everything* Naomi Klein argues that climate change isn't just another issue to be neatly filed between taxes and health care. It's an alarm that calls us to fix an economic system that is already failing us in many ways. Klein meticulously builds the case for how massively reducing our greenhouse emissions is our best chance to simultaneously reduce gaping inequalities, re-imagine our broken democracies, and rebuild our gutted local economies.

21 Lessons for the 21st Century | Yuval Noah Harris

This book is a probing and visionary investigation into today's most urgent issues as we move into the uncharted territory of the future. As technology advances faster than our understanding of it, hacking becomes a tactic of war and the world feels more polarized than ever. Harari addresses the challenge of navigating life in the face of constant and disorienting change and raises the important questions we need to ask ourselves in order to survive.

Upheaval | Jared Diamond**BEST FOR UPPERCLASSMEN**

Jared Diamond, author of popularly successful reads including *Guns, Germs, & Steel*, *Collapse*, *The Third Chimpanzee* among others, looks at the varying responses nations facing major crises have used in responding to them. He analyzes the traits of successful as compared to less successful responses. Among the crises he analyzes are Japan after Commodore Perry's visit, Germany after WWII, and Chile under Allende and Pinochet. He also considers Postwar America's challenges. This is very entertaining read for those interested in modern history and political science.

Warriors Don't Cry | Melba Pattillo Beals**BE SURE TO READ THE ADULT VERSION, NOT THE YOUNG ADULT VERSION**

The subtitle of this book is "a searing memoir of the battle to integrate Little Rock's Central High." The book was written from Melba Beals's personal diaries as one of the nine black students chosen to integrate Central High School in 1957. This is not an easy read—it is filled with threats, adults attacking children, acid-throwing, physical violence, and terribly insulting language. Yet, this group of nine student-warriors stayed strong and changed the country.

We Were the Lucky Ones | Georgia Hunter

This outstanding book is the fictionalized account of the true story of the Kurc family and their experiences during World War II, from pre-war Poland to the gulags in the Soviet Union to death camps and much more. It must be shared that every member of the family survived. It celebrates the resilience of millions during the catastrophe of World War II and is a tribute to the human spirit.