West Genesee High School
Summer Reading Program 2019-2020

The High School’s English Department sponsors an annual Summer Reading Program for students entering grades 9-12. The philosophy behind the program is simple: to encourage students to read more by introducing them to contemporary, pleasurable, yet worthwhile books in the hope that they will become lifelong readers. Each child is required to read one title from those listed under his upcoming grade level.

A committee of parents, students, and teachers has selected the list for each grade level. Effort has been made to address relevant issues in a responsible and thoughtful manner. Consideration has also been given to include books that offer a range of reading levels. It is our hope that this program will be a shared experience between students and parents. Therefore, it is highly recommended that parents assist their child in the selection of a book that is appropriate for him/her. Parents are encouraged to visit the West Genesee High School Library website at <http://westgenesee.org/District/Libraries/HighSchool/HSLib_SummerRead.cfm> for the lists, information about locating books, and access to book reviews.

The individual classroom English teacher will assign a quiz, project, or other activity on the books when the students return to class in September.

*We advise that students take notes or keep a journal as they read so they can better recall information which will be reviewed and assessed in their respective English classes when they return to school in September.*

*Students enrolled in Advanced Placement English are required to complete their own summer reading assignments are exempt from participating in this reading program.*

The books listed in this brochure:
➢ May be borrowed at any local public library.
➢ May be purchased online or at local bookstores.
➢ May be downloaded in the form of eBooks and audiobooks from the WGHS Library-OverDrive. (see librarian for info)

We believe the Summer Reading Program is a positive learning experience for our children. If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions related to the program, please call the Executive Principal at the High School: 487-4601.
GRADE 9

Students entering grade 9 this fall are required to read at least one of the selections listed below.

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Long Way Down by Jason Reynolds: 15 year old Will has just witnessed his brother get shot and killed. In his neighborhood, you don’t snitch- you get revenge. And that’s just what he’s about to do. In this novel, the majority of which takes place over the course of 60 seconds, Will gets on an elevator intent on shooting the man who killed his brother. But, as the ghosts of the past visit him along the ride, Will begins to question whether or not he should go through with what he set out to do.

Positive by Paige Rawl: In this compelling memoir, Paige Rawl shares her story about being HIV positive since birth. She describes the intense bullying she experienced in middle school and the wake up call when she was 15 years old that could have caused the end of her story. Instead, it was only the beginning. She calls upon readers to always choose compassion and to be active members of society. She is now a motivational speaker who embraces life and teaches us all to be POSITIVE, above all.

Colin Fischer by Ashley Edward Miller and Zack Stentz: Colin Fischer just started his freshman year of high school, but he isn’t your average ninth grader. Colin has Asperger’s Syndrome, a neurological condition related to Autism. He hates to be touched and freaks out around loud noises, but he is also very observant. He records his daily observations of the “very interesting” people around him. This comes in handy one day when a handgun goes off in the school cafeteria. Wayne Connelly, the school bully and Colin’s tormentor, is accused of the crime, but Colin is certain that Wayne didn’t do it. Colin is determined to find out who really brought the gun.

Asylum by Madeleine Roux: Dan Crawford, an outcast at his high school, is spending his summer at the New Hampshire College Prep program. Dan hopes this experience will allow him to make friends with interests similar to his own. These hopes seem to come true when he befriends Abby and Jordan. However, everything changes when they decide to explore the creepy basement rooms of the old asylum where their dorm rooms are housed. They soon discover it’s no coincidence that the three of them end up here. The asylum holds the key to a terrifying past, and some of the secrets refuse to stay buried.

Piecing Me Together by Renee Watson: Jade thinks that she has to get out of her neighborhood if she ever wants to make something of herself. With her mother's support, she takes any opportunity that comes her way. But some opportunities feel more demeaning than helpful. As a student in a Women to Women mentoring program, Jade realizes that she doesn't need support from these "mentors" and that she just might be able to show these women a thing or two about the real world and about how to make a real difference. Friendships, race, privilege, identity—this thoughtful story explores real issues young women face.
GRADE 10

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Between Shades of Gray by Ruta Sepetys: In 1939, 16-year-old Lina, her mother, and her younger brother, are deported to a forced-labor camp in Siberia. Lina’s great hope is that somehow her father, who has already been arrested by the Soviet secret police, might find and rescue them. Whether or not this will be possible, it is Lina’s talent for art that will be her salvation, helping her to retain her identity, her dignity, and her increasingly tenuous hold on hope for the future.

The Berlin Boxing Club by Roberta Sharenow: This is a novel loosely inspired by the true story of boxer Max Schmeling’s experiences following Kristallnacht, the night when Nazi soldiers set out to destroy Jewish businesses in Germany. Karl, a Jewish teen, is faced with bullying that occurs when most of his classmates begin to join the Hitler Youth. Because of his father’s work in art dealing, Karl has the good fortune of meeting Max and receiving an invitation to be trained by him at a local gym. Boxing becomes Karl’s refuge in this turbulent time and the key to his coming of age.

A Hope More Powerful Than the Sea by Melissa Fleming: It’s 2011 and 19 year old Doaa is adrift at sea in frigid water holding onto an inflatable ring and two small children for dear life. She is part of the six million Syrian refugees who have been victims of a brutal civil war. This timely story is a voice for all of those whose lives have been, and continue to be, displaced. Doaa must cling to hope in order to survive as she has nothing left. Melissa Fleming first told Doaa’s story in a TED talk and now in this book, which People magazine refers to as “urgently required reading.”

An Uninterrupted View of the Sky by Melanie Crowder: Bolivia, 1999. Francisco’s life is almost normal. He has a mother, a father, and a younger sister. All this changes when his father is arrested under false charges and sent to prison because of a corrupt system that targets the indigenous, poor, and uneducated. As a result, Francisco and his younger sister move into the prison with their father. But, when life in prison becomes something less than safe, Francisco must decide whether to sacrifice his and his sister’s safety for his education. In order to decide, he must face everything he’s ever been taught to believe and question where he belongs in the world.

We Were The Lucky Ones by Georgia Hunter: How do you cope in the midst of war when you do not even know where your family members have been sent? This is a story about the Kurc family, a Jewish family from Radom, Poland, that gets broken up as its members are either forced to move or elect to move to escape danger. This story takes readers from the factories of a Polish ghetto to a labor camp in Siberia to an Italian army troop to a small coastal town in Brazil. It tells of determination, survival, love, and family.
GRADE 11

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The 57 Bus by Dashka Slater: This startling work of nonfiction tells the story of two teens from Oakland, CA. Sasha and Richard find themselves on the same public bus after school one day. One fateful act leaves Sasha covered with third degree burns and Richard facing a possible sentence of life in prison for the two hate crimes he finds himself charged with. Dashka Slater first covered this story as a journalist for The New York Times. By turning their story into a full length-novel, Slater is able to allow readers an intimate glimpse into both teens’ lives, that polarizing incident, and the aftermath that neither of them saw coming. Although centered around a horrible incident, the novel is ultimately about family, education, love, and forgiveness.

Before We Were Yours by Lisa Wingate: Rill Foss and her siblings are taken from their home one night in 1939 in Memphis, Tennessee, brought to an orphanage, and told they will one day be reunited with their parents. Rill vows to keep her siblings together, but it is a difficult task considering the harsh conditions they face. Many years later, Avery Stafford, a lawyer from a privileged background returns home to discover some shocking secrets from her past. This novel is based on a little-known, yet true story!

Ultimatum by K.M. Walton: It’s not Oscar’s fault that he’s misunderstood. Ever since his mother died, he’s been disrespected by his father and bullied by his self-absorbed older brother, so he withdraws from his dysfunctional family, seeking refuge in his art. Vance, Oscar’s older brother, wishes Oscar would just be cool and loosen up. It was hard enough dealing with their mother’s death without Oscar getting all emotional. At least when Vance pushes himself in lacrosse and hanging out with friends, he feels alive. But, when their father’s alcoholism sends him into liver failure, the two brothers must come face-to-face with their demons, and each other, if they are going to survive a very uncertain future.

Who Killed Christopher Goodman? by Allan Wolf: Christopher Goodman might be a little odd, but people really like him. So who would want to kill him? This novel, based on a true story of a teenage boy who was killed in 1979, is told from the point of view of six different people--including the person who killed Christopher. The novel doesn’t just attempt to answer the question of who did it, but more importantly- how could something like this happen.

You Bring the Distant Near by Mitali Perkins: Sonia and Tara Das, who were born in India but spent most of their childhoods in England, immigrate to America with their parents in the 70’s. Sonia is extremely bright and loves reading and writing, while Tara seeks the limelight and models her look after her favorite American TV stars. The sisters navigate school, friendships, dating, and an overbearing mother while also grappling with a sense of their own identities. Just when things seem to be going well for the family, tragedy strikes and threatens to change their lives, and relationships, forever. This novel, told from the point of view of alternating narrators and covering four decades, is as interesting as it is poignant.
GRADE 12

Students entering grade 12 this fall are required to read at least one of the selections listed below.

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The Inexplicable Logic of My Life by Benjamin Alire Saenz: Since he was little, the only parent Sal has known is his loving, adoptive father. As the novel opens, Sal, a senior in high school, uncharacteristically punches a classmate in the face for calling his father a derogatory name. From that moment on, Sal begins to question everything about his life that has, until now, seemed to make sense. Over the course of this moving coming-of-age novel, Sal’s friends, Sam and Fito, form a close bond and help him through this challenging time. But Sam and Fito have problems of their own...

Boy21 by Matthew Quick: Finley McManus has always seen basketball as a distraction from the difficulties of his life and as a possible way out of the violence of his neighborhood. In his senior year, Finley’s coach introduces him to Russ, a new boy in school with a tragic past. However, befriending Russ proves to be more difficult than Finley expected. At first, Finley thinks he and Russ could not be more different. Russ rarely speaks, only answers to the name Boy21, and has an intense obsession with outer space. As the school year goes on, Finley and Russ form an unlikely friendship that may change both their lives.

The Names They Gave Us by Emery Lord: Lucy Hansson is ready to have the summer of her life as a camp counselor at the Bible camp that her parents run. However, things take a turn when her mom’s cancer returns, her boyfriend decides they should “take a break”, and her faith begins to waver. To top it all off, she gets a camp counselor job at a camp across the lake for troubled youth. Lucy is not sure why any of this is happening until some family secrets begin to surface. What will Lucy do in the face of her biggest challenges yet?

The Nightingale by Kristin Hannah: It is France in the year 1939. The Nazis are very close to invading, and even though Vianne Mauriac says goodbye to her husband as he heads for the front line, she doesn’t believe it. Vianne’s story will pull you in as she has to make one choice after another to keep her family alive, especially when a German captain is assigned to live in her home. To complicate this, her sister Isabelle becomes a member of the Resistance, giving Vianne even more reason to be troubled as her life is endangered over and over again. This novel compellingly highlights the “women’s war” that is seldom told.

Please Stop Laughing at Me by Jodee Blanco: Have you ever felt shunned, ostracized, or rejected by classmates? Most people have felt this way at some point in their high school career, but for Jodee Blanco it is a regular occurrence. Jodee writes the true story of how she was bullied, and even physically abused, from elementary school through high school. Her memoir provides an honest look at what it means to be an outcast and the long term effects of being bullied.