

2023-24 Western Tech Summer and First Quarter Reading

As newspapers around the world craft their stories, and as politicians tweet their ideas or offer their speeches, or even as movies offer up their heroic narratives, it remains vital that we be able to read critically, thoughtfully, and deeply.

For this year’s summer reading, we are providing you a list of recommended texts—these are a mix of novels generally approved by BCPS, and texts (some fiction, some nonfiction) that are recommended by teachers around the building.

Please select **at least one** of these works to read, for their commentary on the human condition, or for their ability to tell a truth that isn’t widely heard. Some of these are “classics” of literature that we may read again in high school; some of these are more modern works commenting on current events, identity, and long-standing tensions in society. We hope you read something that illuminates and challenges you!

Once you have selected a book, please read it purposefully and thoughtfully. Take notes! Use post-its! Keep a journal! Assessments will require making a claim and using textual evidence from the book, so you will want to mark passages that might be good to use.

As you read, select one of the following assessment choices to complete. You will be allowed to use the text and your notes. You will turn in your choice of assessment project, and then you will give a short presentation to your class about your choice of project.

This is a minor summative grade worth 40 points. You should complete your chosen assessment before Late September so that you are prepared to present your work in class the first week of October.

<p>Assessment Choice A: Create a “Book trailer”: 2-3 minute video pitching your book to other students. In your trailer, make a claim about theme, meaning, or quality of the text, and/or analyze theme, plot, conflict, or character development throughout the text, using quotations and examples to support your claim.</p> <p>Include a paragraph or more of reflection and commentary about free choice reading. See Choice D for ideas for this.</p>	<p>Assessment Choice B: “Testimonial” – Write the script and/or deliver/record a speech in which you offer praise/a review of this book and discuss why your classmates should read it. Be sure to develop your testimonial by referencing specific scenes, passages, events, and more.</p> <p>Include a paragraph or more of reflection and commentary about free choice reading. See Choice D for ideas for this.</p>	<p>Assessment Choice C: A text analysis and review: why does this book matter? Identify an important literary element in the text, such as setting, style, characterization, or other features. Describe the importance of that element to the meaning of the text, and briefly explain why this is an important book to read.</p> <p>Include a paragraph or more of reflection and commentary about free choice reading. See Choice D for ideas for this.</p>	<p>Assessment Choice D: Extended Reflection on free-choice reading.</p> <p>Write, speak, record, or otherwise compose a reflection in which you discuss your own history and tastes as a reader, and then offer insight into the ways this book does or does not fit those. Is this similar to other things you read? Is this new and surprising, interesting, or engaging to you? How does it compare to things you read for school and pleasure? What was most interesting about the book? As you work, share specific quotes, moments, passages, scenes, etc., that are relevant.</p>	<p>Assessment Choice E:</p> <p>Graphic Novel/Comic/Storyboard / Dramatic re-telling of the text.</p> <p>Create a visual representation of several key moments in the text. You can use a comics generator to create a storyboard, or you can re-enact key scenes alone or with friends. Submit your work as a document or video recording. Be sure that you include multiple important moments from the text. Then include a short analysis that makes a claim about the relationship between the scenes you picked, and the meaning of the work as a whole.</p> <p>Include a paragraph or more of reflection and commentary about free choice reading. See Choice D for ideas for this.</p>
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While we strongly encourage you to read something from this list, you are allowed to select other works of significant literary merit or high interest to you.

You can find alternative suggested summer reading options for students and adults in many places, including [Baltimore County Public Library](#) and [Western Tech's Library](#), where you can access books for free online or place holds; the *New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and Amazon.com. Check out the [Black Eyed Susan 23-24 Nominees](#) (select from high school nominees only). Want to put current events into context? Interested in anti-racist action and reading? Check out [Common Sense Media's Summer Reading recommendations](#). We will post these links on the school website as well! Students are also encouraged to participate in the [BCPL Summer Reading Challenge](#).

Students can use their BCPS student ID to access books via the Baltimore County Public Library. We have compiled a [handy set of directions for accessing Western's Library and BCPL for you](#); have your student ID number close.

We look forward to hearing about your summer reading and the ideas you have encountered, and hope that you find some good books to read!

Suggested / Recommended Texts

Please read something that you've never read before!

Recommended Grade 9 titles

- *The House on Mango Street*, by Sandra Cisneros (recommended by Profesor Ruth)
- *Fahrenheit 451*, by Ray Bradbury (recommended by Profesor Ruth)
- *All Quiet on the Western Front*, by Eric Remarque (recommended by Mr. Renaud)
- *Darius the Great is Not Okay*, by Adib Khorram
- *Of Mice and Men*, by John Steinbeck
- *Hidden Figures*, by Margot Lee Shetterly (suggested by Mr. Streets)
- *Funny in Farsi*, by Firoozeh Dumas
- *Poet X* by Elizabeth Acevedo

Recommended for all grade levels

Memoir/Biography and Nonfiction

- *Born a Crime*, by Trevor Noah
- *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, by Malcolm X and Alex Haley
- *Enrique's Journey*, by Sonia Nazarian
- *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, by Rebecca Skloot
- *Hiroshima*, by John Hersey
- *The Glass Castle*, by Jeannette Winterson
- *Funny in Farsi*, by Firoozeh Dumas
- *Between the World and Me*, by Ta-Nehisi Coates
- *Educated*, by Tara Westover
- *Becoming*, by Michelle Obama
- *Outliers*, by Malcolm Gladwell
- *Into Thin Air*, by John Krakauer
- *Unbroken*, by Laura Hillenbrand
- *The Distance Between Us*, by Reyna Grande

Fiction and Drama

- *Siddhartha*, by Herman Hesse
- *1984*, by George Orwell
- *Sense and Sensibility*, by Jane Austen
- *A Lesson Before Dying*, by Ernest J. Gaines
- *The Awakening*, by Kate Chopin
- *The Handmaid's Tale*, by Margaret Atwood
- *Where the Crawdads Sing*, by Delia Owens
- *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime*, by Mark Haddon
- *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, by Sherman Alexie
- *The God of Small Things*, by Arundhati Roy
- *Orphan Train*, by Christina Baker Kline
- *On Beauty*, by Zadie Smith (recommended by Ms. Lewis)
- *A Raisin in the Sun*, by Lorraine Hansberry
- *The Joy Luck Club*, by Amy Tan
- *The Namesake*, by Jhumpa Lahiri
- *Zone One or Underground Railroad*, by Colson Whitehead
- *Demon Copperhead*, by Barbara Kingsolver

Grading and Evaluation: Projects A and D:	Grading and Evaluation: Projects B, C, and D
<p>Makes argumentative/analytic claim about text _____ / 3</p>	<p>Argumentative thesis about theme, meaning, or importance of the text _____ / 3</p>
<p>Selects effective and varied evidence for claims/project _____ / 5</p>	<p>Project evidence is selected to support thesis _____ / 5</p>
<p>Implies how ending, falling action, or resolution are affected _____ / 4</p>	<p>Project evidence and analysis effectively cover the entire text and imply how ending, resolution, or falling action are important _____ / 4</p>
<p>Reveals author's tone or purpose _____ / 4</p>	<p>Commentary & analysis effectively link evidence and thesis for audience understanding _____ / 4</p>
<p>Commentary, analysis, or other text is effective for audience understanding _____ / 4</p>	<p>Project uses multiple textual references to support each idea in analysis _____ / 4</p>
<p>Is clearly organized to present information effectively _____ / 4</p>	<p>Project develops analysis using effective and accurate literary terminology such as theme, characterization, plot elements, and/or others as needed _____ / 5</p>
<p>Avoids mere summary; develops analysis of theme, meaning, or artistic quality of text and supports with multiple examples _____ / 5</p>	<p>Includes serious & substantive reflection on reading for pleasure/free choice reading, with references to text/passages/etc. _____ / 6</p>
<p>Includes serious & substantive reflection on reading for pleasure/free choice reading, with references to text/passages/etc. _____ / 6</p>	<p>Project is clearly organized and related material is kept together _____ / 4</p>
<p>Polished and revised to avoid errors in design, meaning, and conventions of standard English _____ / 5</p>	<p>Project is polished and revised to avoid errors in design, meaning, and conventions of standard English _____ / 5</p>
<p>TOTAL _____ / 40</p>	<p>TOTAL _____ / 40</p>