



Entering Grades 10 & 11 Summer Reading





Summer Reading Directions

1

All students are expected to read **at least one book** this summer and complete a **critical review** of their selected book. Students may choose a book from the recommended book lists on SLIDE 12, or select a title recommended by their McLean teachers on SLIDES 13 – 45. They're also welcome to choose a book that isn't on the lists provided, as long as it is appropriate and engaging for their grade level and they haven't read it before.

2

As students read, they should notes on the key elements of the book.

3

Students are required to write a 2–3 page Critical Review of the book.

1

Critical Review Outline:



Paragraph #1

An introductory paragraph (with the title and author of your text) that hooks the reader and introduces key people, places, and events.

2

Critical Review Outline:



Paragraph /
Section 2

One paragraph or section that describes the book's protagonist (main character). You should include details, quotes, summaries, and explanations from the beginning, middle, and end of the book.

3

Critical Review Outline:



Paragraph /
Section 3

One paragraph or section that describes the book's major conflict. You should include details, quotes, summaries, and explanations from the beginning, middle, and end of the book.

4

Critical Review Outline:



Paragraph /
Section 4

One paragraph or section that connects the text to another literary text, historical context, or current event. You should include details, quotes, summaries, and explanations from the beginning, middle, and end of the book.

5

Critical Review Outline:



Paragraph /
Section 5

One paragraph or section that concludes your Critical Review and connect the book to your life.

Critical Review PRODUCT:

Your Critical Review should have...

- ❑ Complete Sentences
- ❑ Accurate Spelling & Grammar
- ❑ A Works Cited Page
- ❑ Proper MLA Formatting
- ❑ Double-Spaced, 12-Point, Legible Font



US Writing Template (MLA Formatted):

1" ↑
↓

Header: Last name & page number Walden 1

Your Name

Instructor's Name

Class information (English 1A)

Date

double
space
text ←

Center Title of Essay

Begin your paragraph one double-spaced line below

1" ← → 1"

your centered title; the paragraph should begin with a
1/2" tabbed indent. The paper's heading goes in the
upper-left corner of the first page only. Use 1" margins
all around. Double space everything, including blocked
quotes. Do not justify the right margin.

double
space
text ←



Reminder: Students are **not permitted** to have any additional support with this assignment, including: help from a classmate, the use of online resources or movies/TV shows, and the use/support of AI. Students may listen to their books and use spellcheck and Grammarly to edit their mistakes (but not to improve their writing).



Please be prepared to **submit** your completed Critical Review **on the Mustang Portal by Friday, September 5, 2025.**





Recommended Reading List:

Linked below are several websites featuring recommended reading lists for students to explore as they select a book to read this summer.

- [Montgomery County Public Library's High School Summer Reading List](#)
- [New York Public Library's Spring 2025 Picks for Teens](#)
- [Summer Reading from Penguin Books](#)
- [American Library Association Recommended Reading for Young Adults](#)

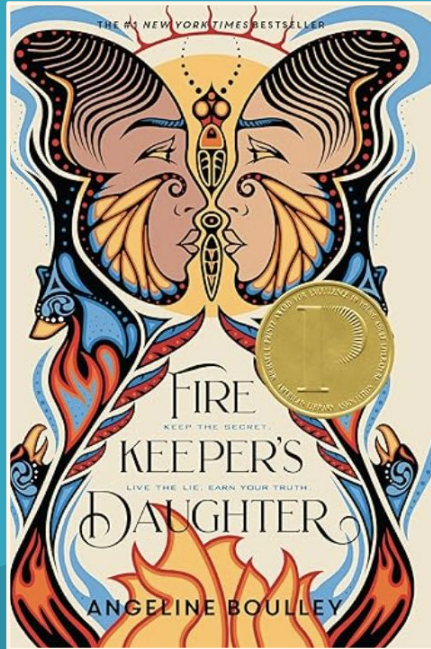
Recommended Reading List:

Action / Adventure & Mystery / Thriller

Books with  (ebook) or  (audiobook and ebook) are available on **SORA**.

Title: *Firekeeper's Daughter*

Author: Angeline Boulley

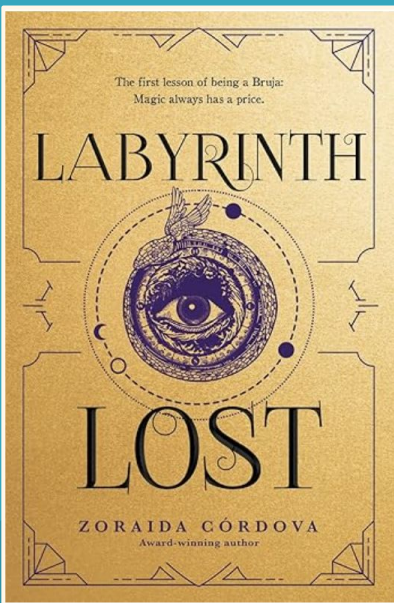


Synopsis:

Daunis Fontaine, an 18-year-old caught between her hometown and Ojibwe roots, puts college on hold after a family tragedy. When she witnesses a murder and becomes involved in an FBI drug investigation, she's forced to go undercover. As she uses her knowledge of science and traditional medicine to search for the truth, Daunis uncovers painful secrets and must decide how far she's willing to go to protect her community.

Title: *Labyrinth Lost*

Author: Zoraida Córdova



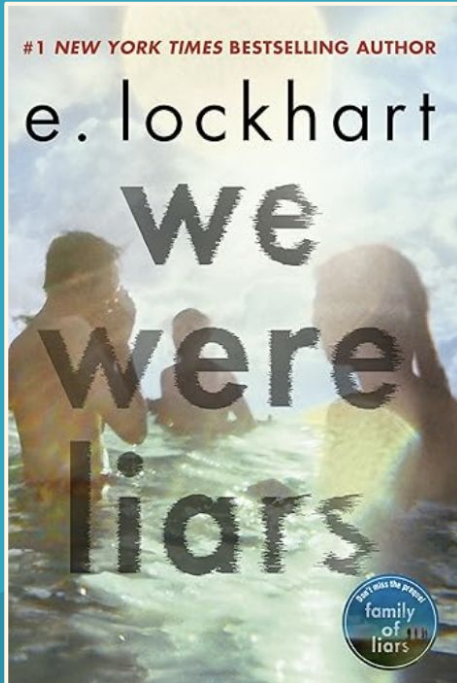
Synopsis:

Alex is a powerful bruja who hates magic—especially after it caused her father to disappear. Instead of celebrating her Quinceañera, she plans a Deathday ritual to get rid of her powers. But when the spell backfires and her family vanishes, Alex is left with their magic and no idea how to fix it.

With the help of Nova, a mysterious brujo, Alex journeys to the mystical realm of Los Lagos to bring her family back—only to uncover secrets that will change everything she thought she knew.

Title: *We Were Liars*

Author: E. Lockhart



Synopsis:

Cadence Sinclair Eastman returns to her family's private island, struggling to recall the events of a traumatic summer. Alongside her cousins Mirren and Johnny, and their friend Gat—together known as “the Liars” —Cady tries to piece together what happened during Summer Fifteen, when an accident left her with a head injury and fractured memories of the Sinclair family's buried secrets.

Title: *Peak*

Author: Roland Smith





Synopsis:

After getting arrested for climbing a skyscraper, Peak Marcello is sent to live with his estranged father, who runs a climbing company. But his father's sudden interest comes with a catch—he wants Peak to become the youngest person to summit Everest, more for his own gain than Peak's. For Peak, it's the ultimate challenge—but one that could come at a dangerous cost.

Recommended Reading List:

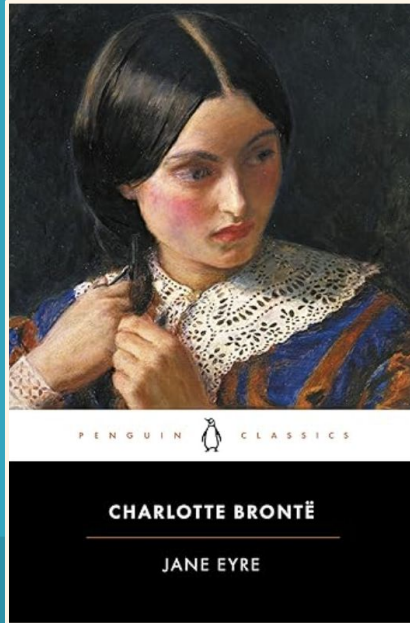
Classics

Books with  (ebook) or  (audiobook and ebook) are available on **SORA**.

Title: *Jane Eyre*



Author: Charlotte Brontë



Synopsis:

Jane Eyre, an orphan raised in hardship, grows into a strong and independent woman. As a governess at Thornfield Hall, she falls in love with her employer, Mr. Rochester—but his dark secret forces her to choose between her heart and her principles.

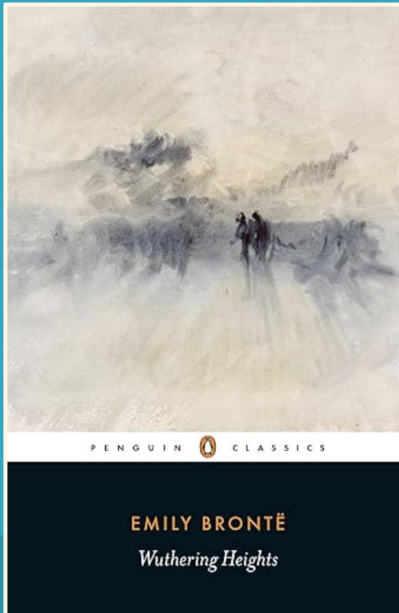
Title: *Wuthering Heights*



Author: Emily Brontë

Synopsis:

When Lockwood, a new tenant on the Yorkshire moors, seeks shelter at Wuthering Heights, he uncovers the dark history of Heathcliff and Catherine Earnshaw. Torn between love and social expectations, Catherine chooses stability over passion—setting off a cycle of vengeance that haunts the next generation.



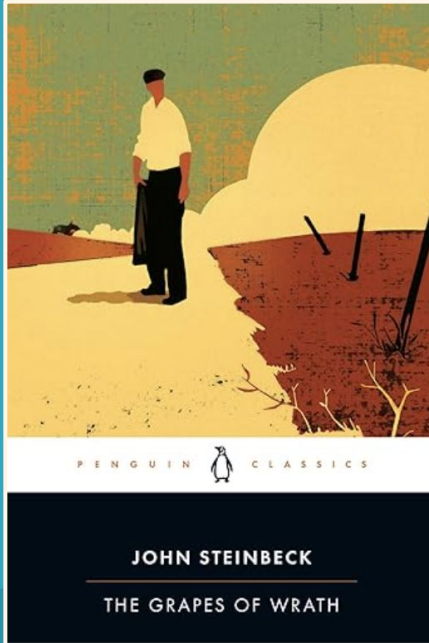
Title: *The Grapes of Wrath*

Author: John Steinbeck



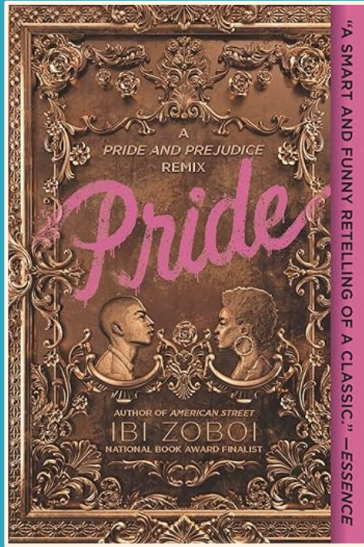
Synopsis:

Set during the Dust Bowl of the 1930s, the story follows the Joad family as they journey from Oklahoma to California in search of a better life. Along the way, they face poverty, injustice, and the harsh divide between the powerful and the powerless. Through their struggles, the novel explores themes of dignity, resilience, and the fight for justice during the Great Depression.



Title: *Pride: A Pride and Prejudice Remix*

Author: Ibi Zoboi



Synopsis:



Zuri Benitez has pride. Brooklyn pride, family pride, and pride in her Afro-Latino roots. But pride might not be enough to save her rapidly gentrifying neighborhood from becoming unrecognizable.

When the wealthy Darcy family moves in across the street, Zuri wants nothing to do with their two teenage sons, even as her older sister, Janae, starts to fall for the charming Ainsley. She especially can't stand the judgmental and arrogant Darius. Yet as Zuri and Darius are forced to find common ground, their initial dislike shifts into an unexpected understanding.

But with four wild sisters pulling her in different directions, cute boy Warren vying for her attention, and college applications hovering on the horizon, Zuri fights to find her place in Bushwick's changing landscape, or lose it all.

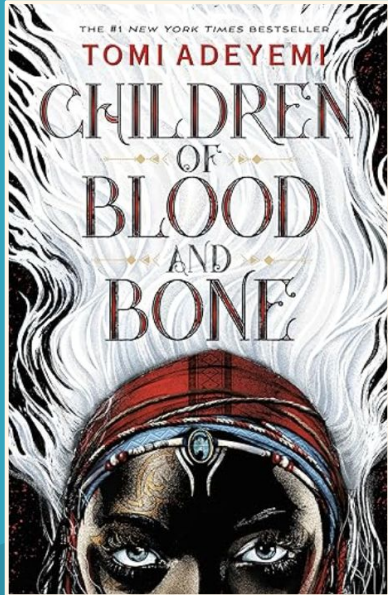
Recommended Reading List:

Fantasy / Mythology / Science Fiction

Books with  (ebook) or  (audiobook and ebook) are available on **SORA**.

Title: *Children of Blood and Bone*

Author: Tomi Adeyemi



Synopsis:

ZÉlie Adebola remembers when magic filled the land of Orīsha—when maji like her mother could summon souls. But after a cruel king wiped out magic and killed her mother, everything changed. Now, with help from a rebel princess, ZÉlie has one chance to bring magic back and fight the monarchy. As she's hunted by a determined crown prince and faces danger at every turn, ZÉlie must learn to control her powers—and her heart—before it's too late.

Title: *Children of Virtue and Vengeance*

Author: Tomi Adeyemi



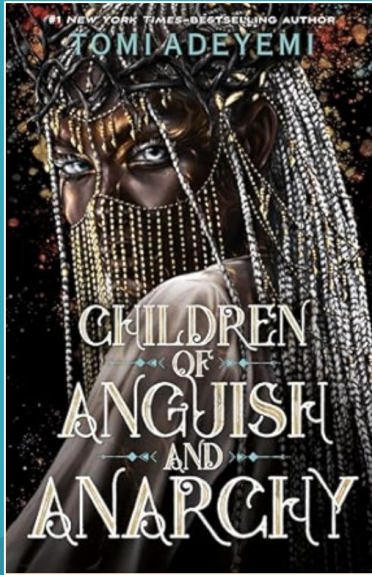
Synopsis:

After restoring magic to Orïsha, Zélie and Amari face unexpected consequences—nobles with magical ancestry now have powers, too. As tensions rise and the monarchy fights to maintain control, Zélie must rally the divided maji and help Amari claim the throne before civil war erupts.

Children of Virtue and Vengeance is the powerful sequel to Tomi Adeyemi's bestselling *Children of Blood and Bone*.

Title: *Children of Anguish and Anarchy*

Author: Tomi Adeyemi



Synopsis:

ZÉlie thought the fight was over when the monarchy fell—but now she's a prisoner on a foreign ship, captured by King Baldyr, a ruthless ruler seeking her power. As she, Amari, and Tzain search for allies in distant lands, danger grows. ZÉlie must summon all her strength to stop Baldyr before he destroys Orïsha forever.

Title: *On the Edge of Gone*

Author: Corinne Duyvis

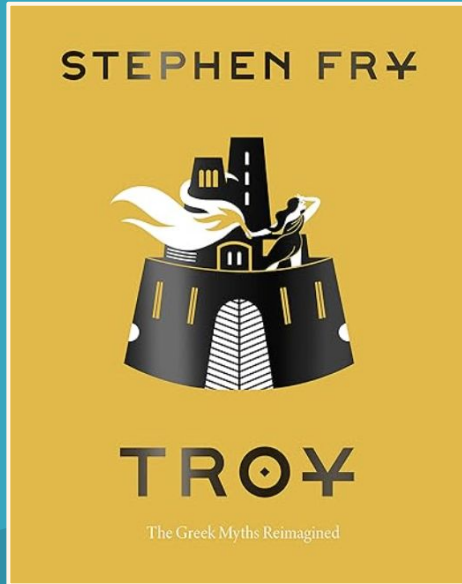


Synopsis:

January 29, 2035. That's the day the comet is scheduled to hit—the big one. Denise and her mother and sister, Iris, have been assigned to a temporary shelter near their hometown of Amsterdam to wait out the blast, but Iris is nowhere to be found, and at the rate Denise's drug-addicted mother is going, they'll never reach the shelter in time. Then a last-minute encounter leads them to something better than a temporary shelter: a generation ship that's scheduled to leave earth behind and colonize new worlds after the comet hits. But each passenger must have a practical skill to contribute. Denise is autistic and fears that she'll never be allowed to stay. Can she obtain a spot before the ship takes flight? What about her mother and sister? When the future of the human race is at stake, whose lives matter most?

Title: *Troy*

Author: Stephen Fry

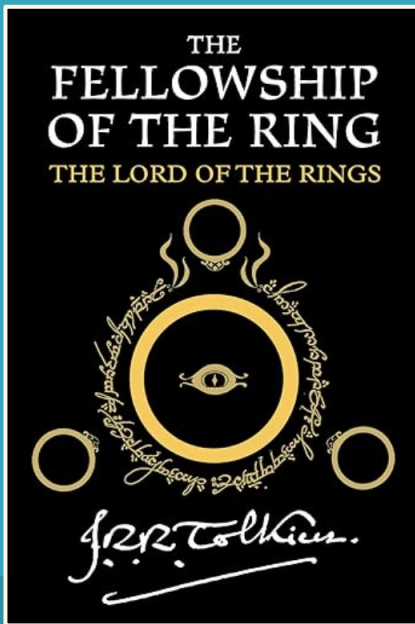


Synopsis:

Brimming with tragic heroes, legendary love affairs, and the relentless pull of fate, the Trojan War remains one of history's most iconic conflicts. In *Troy*, Stephen Fry retells the epic saga with wit, heart, and gripping detail. Through his vivid storytelling, figures like Achilles, Hector, Odysseus, and Helen come to life once more. Paired with classical artwork, this modern take on an ancient myth draws readers into a dazzling world of passion, pride, and war.

Title: *The Fellowship of the Ring*

Author: J. R. R. Tolkien





Synopsis:

Long ago, the Elves forged the Rings of Power—but Sauron, the Dark Lord, secretly created the One Ring to control them all. Though the Ring was lost for ages, it eventually came into the possession of Bilbo Baggins. Now, his young cousin Frodo must leave the safety of the Shire to carry the Ring on a dangerous journey across Middle-earth, aiming to destroy it and stop Sauron's return to power.

Recommended Reading List:

Historical Fiction

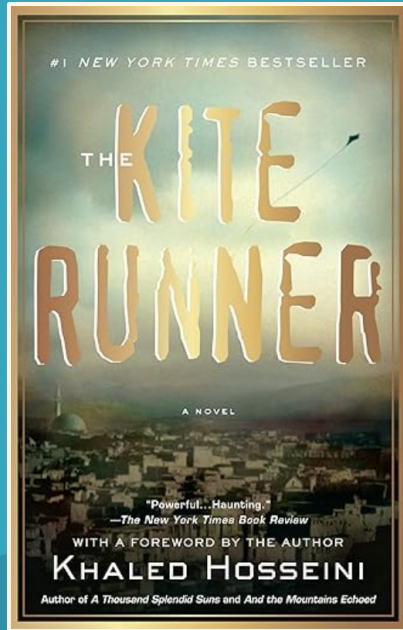
Books with  (ebook) or  (audiobook and ebook) are available on **SORA**.

Title: *The Kite Runner*

Author: Khaled Hosseini

Synopsis:

Set against the backdrop of a changing and war-torn Afghanistan, *The Kite Runner* tells the unforgettable story of a wealthy boy and the son of his father's servant, whose unlikely friendship is tested by betrayal and guilt. More than a tale of friendship, it explores the power of storytelling, the weight of betrayal, the hope for redemption, and the complex bond between fathers and sons.

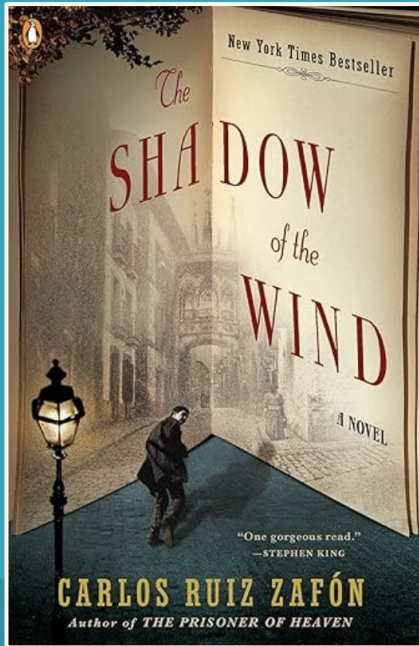


Title: *The Shadow of the Wind*

Author: Carlos Ruiz

Synopsis:

In post-Civil War Barcelona, young Daniel, grieving his mother's death, finds comfort in a rare novel titled *The Shadow of the Wind* by Julián Carax. But when he searches for more of Carax's works, he uncovers a chilling truth—someone has been destroying every copy of the author's books. As Daniel digs deeper, his search unravels a dark mystery filled with murder, obsession, and a tragic love story hidden in the heart of the city.



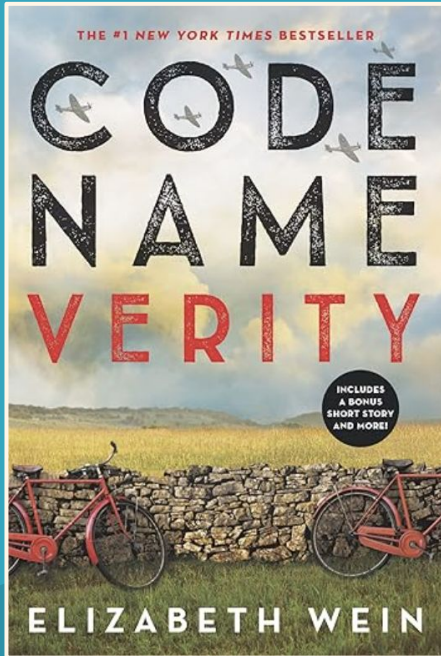
Title: *Code Name Verity*



Author: Elizabeth Wein

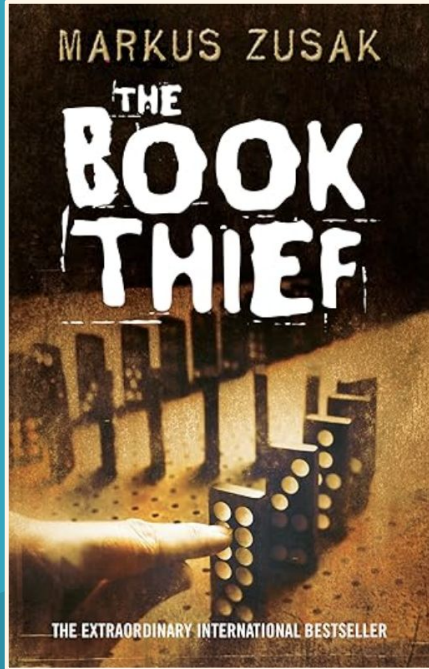
Synopsis:

October 11, 1943—A British spy plane crashes in Nazi-occupied France. The pilot and passenger are best friends, but only one has a chance to survive. Captured by the Gestapo, "Verity" faces an impossible choice: reveal her mission or face execution. As she writes her confession, she recounts her friendship with pilot Maddie and the events that led to the crash. *Code Name Verity* is a gripping tale of loyalty, courage, and sacrifice in wartime.



Title: *The Book Thief*

Author: Markus Zusak





Synopsis:

When Death has a story to tell, you listen.

In 1939 Nazi Germany, the world is on the brink, and Death is busier than ever. Amid the chaos, Liesel Meminger, a foster child near Munich, survives by stealing books—her greatest temptation. With the guidance of her gentle, accordion-playing foster father, she learns to read and begins sharing the stolen stories, offering comfort to neighbors during air raids and to the Jewish man hiding in her basement.

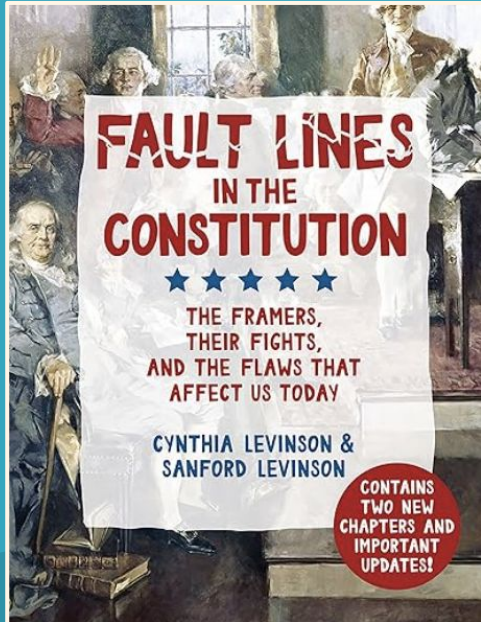
Recommended Reading List:

Nonfiction

Books with  (ebook) or  (audiobook and ebook) are available on **SORA**.

Title: *Fault Lines in the Constitution: The Framers, Their Fights and the Flaws That Affect Us*

Author: Cynthia and Sanford Levinson

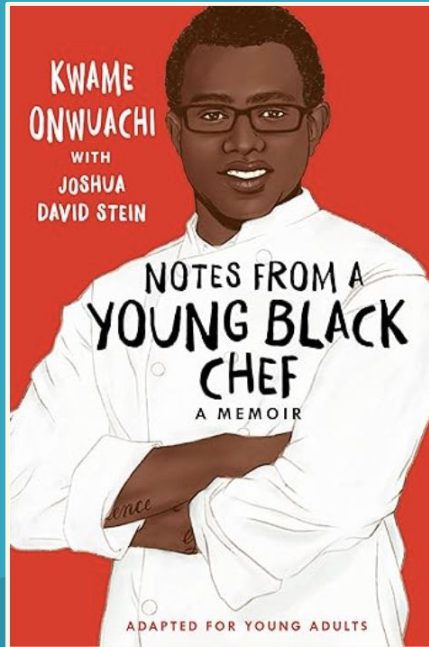


Synopsis:

Many of the political issues we struggle with today have their roots in the US Constitution. Think Electoral College, gerrymandering, even the Senate. Many of us take these features in our system for granted. But they came about through haggling in an overheated room back in 1787, and we're still experiencing the ramifications today. Each chapter begins with a story that connects directly back to a section of the document that forms the basis of our society and government.

Title: *Notes from a Young Black Chef (Adapted for Young Readers)*

Author: Kwame Onwuachi and Joshua David Stein



Synopsis:

By the time he was twenty-seven years old, Kwame Onwuachi had opened—and closed—one of the most talked about restaurants in America. He had sold drugs in New York and been shipped off to rural Nigeria to “learn respect.” He had launched his own catering company with twenty thousand dollars made from selling candy on the subway and starred on *Top Chef*.

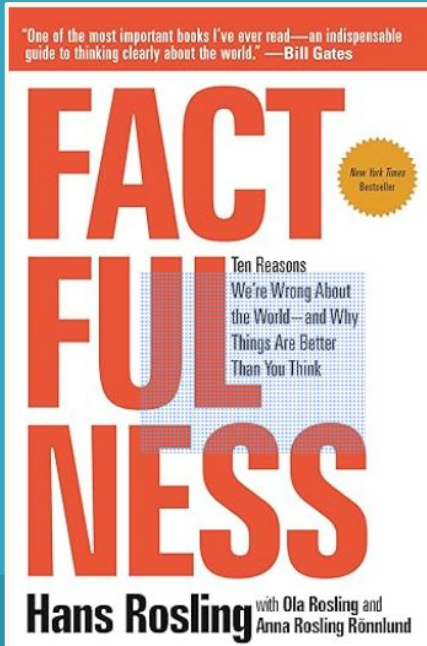
Through it all, Onwuachi’s love of food and cooking remained a constant, even when, as a young chef, he was forced to grapple with just how unwelcoming the food world can be for people of color. In this inspirational memoir about the intersection of race, fame, and food, he shares the remarkable story of his culinary coming-of-age; a powerful, heartfelt, and shockingly honest account of chasing your dreams—even when they don’t turn out as you expected.

Title: *Factfulness*

Author: Hans Rosling

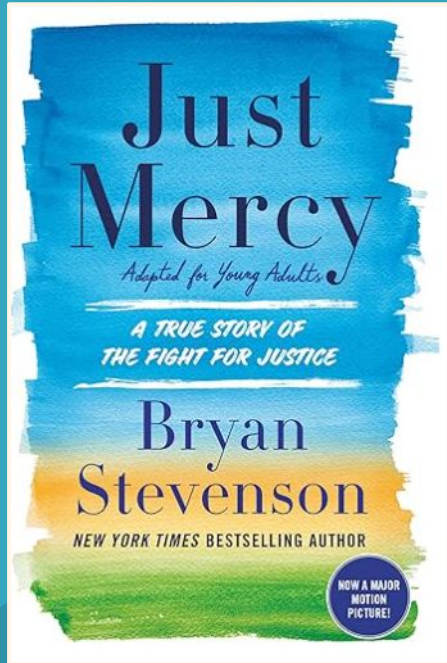
Synopsis:

In *Factfulness*, Hans Rosling explores how our natural instincts often lead us to misunderstand the world by exaggerating problems and distorting reality. He identifies ten core instincts that shape our perception in misleading ways, fueling unnecessary fear and pessimism. Through his analysis, Rosling offers practical strategies for challenging these instincts and shifting toward a more accurate, fact-based worldview—one that can transform how we think, feel, and respond to global issues.



Title: *Just Mercy*

Author: Bryan Stevenson





Synopsis:

Just Mercy: Young Readers Edition tells the true story of lawyer Bryan Stevenson and his fight for justice in the U.S. legal system. Focusing on his work defending people who were wrongfully convicted or unfairly sentenced—especially children and people of color—Stevenson shares powerful stories from his career, including that of Walter McMillian, a Black man sentenced to death for a crime he didn't commit. This adaptation makes complex legal issues accessible for younger readers and emphasizes the importance of compassion, fairness, and the fight for equal justice.

Recommended Reading List:

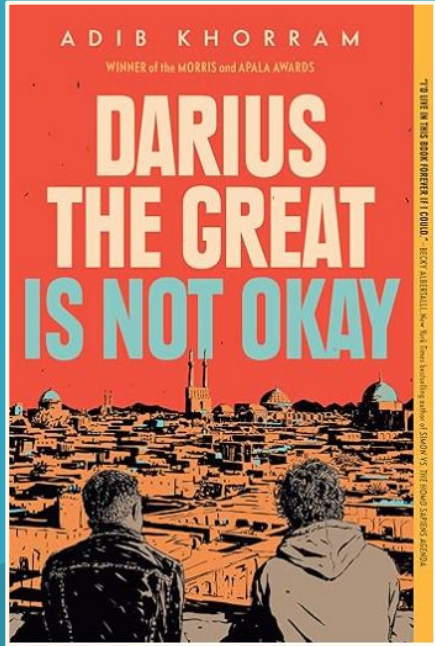
Realistic Fiction

Books with  (ebook) or  (audiobook and ebook) are available on **SORA**.

Title: *Darius the Great is Not Okay*



Author: Adib Khorram



Synopsis:

Darius Kellner, more fluent in Klingon than Farsi, has never quite fit in—at home or with his Persian heritage. Struggling with clinical depression, he's unsure what to expect from his first trip to Iran. But when he meets Sohrab, the boy next door, an unexpected friendship begins. As they bond over soccer, sweets, and quiet conversations, Darius starts to feel seen in a way he never has—especially when Sohrab calls him Darioush, his Persian name, and helps him embrace a part of himself he didn't know he was missing.

Title: *No Fixed Address*



Author: Susin Nielsen





Synopsis:

Twelve-and-three-quarter-year-old Felix Knutsson has a knack for trivia. His favorite game show is *Who What Where When*; he even named his gerbil after the host. Felix's mom, Astrid, is loving but can't seem to hold on to a job. So when they get evicted from their latest shabby apartment, they have to move into a van. Astrid swears him to secrecy; he can't tell anyone about their living arrangement, not even Dylan and Winnie, his best friends at his new school. If he does, she warns him, he'll be taken away from her and put in foster care.

As their circumstances go from bad to worse, Felix gets a chance to audition for a junior edition of *Who What Where When*, and he's determined to earn a spot on the show. Winning the cash prize could make everything okay again. But things don't turn out the way he expects.

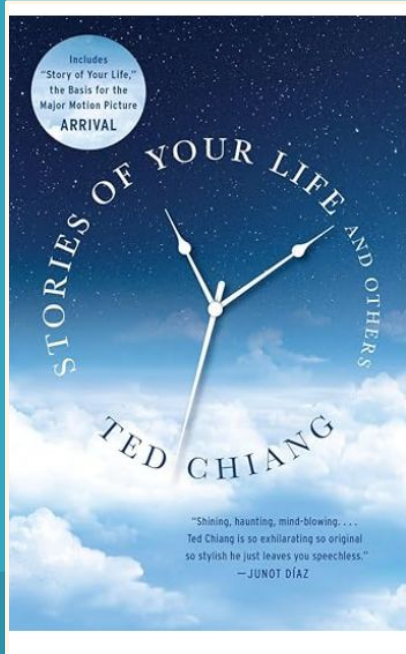
Recommended Reading List:

Short Stories & Poetry

Books with  (ebook) or  (audiobook and ebook) are available on **SORA**.

Title: *Stories of Your Life and Others*

Author: Ted Chiang

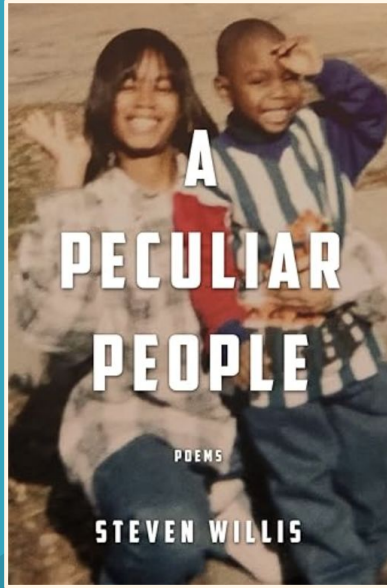


Synopsis:

Stories of Your Life and Others blends the uncanny with the deeply human, following characters who face extraordinary events—like alien contact or emerging AI—with relatable emotion and insight. With wit and depth, Ted Chiang explores what it means to live in a world full of both uncertainty and wonder. This award-winning collection has cemented his place as one of today's most acclaimed writers.

Title: *A Peculiar People*

Author: Steven Willis (McLean's New English Teacher!)



Synopsis:

Steven Willis builds a vivid world through poetry, bringing to life a range of characters and their personal struggles. Blending pop culture and screenwriting techniques, Willis offers sharp social commentary from a fresh perspective. This powerful collection reflects on his lived experience, particularly the pain of being Black in a systemically racist society.