Summer Reading Assignment 2018
English 9
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Rationale
The school year is filled with required reading, but summer is a time to enjoy reading for FUN! Our hope is that all incoming ninth graders will find a couple of texts from the list below that they enjoy reading. All students must read Elie Weisel’s *Night*, our first required text of the year. Students should select two other choice books to read in addition to *Night*. Students are welcome to use audio books for the choice books, and may use an audio book to listen to *Night* as they follow along with the text, but they must bring a physical copy of *Night* to class for the first unit of study in August.

Required
*Night* – Elie Wiesel
Note: Ideally, this book should be finished just before school starts in August. Reading the book earlier in the summer will make class discussion and paper writing more difficult, so we recommend that you end your summer reading with *Night*. A good choice would be to read it once in the early summer and a second time before school starts (and its short length is conducive to reading it twice through). It is suggested but not required that you highlight passages that are important to character development for easy reference during class discussions and writing assignments.

Choice
All students are required to choose at least two choice books from the list below to read in addition to *Night*.

A Note for Parents on Book Selections
Though we have not personally read every title listed below, many are award winners, and all have been recommended by the American Librarian Association (ALA) or by our own team of awesome Overlake school librarians. We feel comfortable recommending the titles listed below as age/grade-level appropriate books. We strongly recommend that parents read the synopses below, browse through the books in book stores, and be involved in the selection of titles for summer reading. They make for great dinner and car ride conversations! We are always looking for new titles to add to our list, so if your son or daughter reads a great book this summer that should be added to the list, please email your suggestion!

Choice Reads
- *Speak* – Laurie Halse Anderson
- *Seraphina* – Rachel Hartman
- *Climbing the Stairs* – Padma Venkatraman
- *Ship Breaker* – Paolo Bacigalupi
- *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* – Mark Haddon
- *Nil* – Lynne Matson
- *Nervous Conditions* – Tsitsi Dangarembga
Challenging/Mature Choice Reads
- *Debbie Harry Sings in French* – Meagan Brothers
- *Parrotfish* – Ellen Wittlinger
- *The Particular Sadness of Lemon Cake* – Aimee Bender
- *My Name is Asher Lev* – Chaim Potok
- *Harp of Burma* – Michio Takeyama
- *Yellow Raft in Blue Water* – Michael Dorris

Responding to Summer Reading
Upon returning to school, students will be writing and responding orally to prompts based upon their summer reading. To come to school unprepared for that writing would be a poor start to the year. So read, think, and enjoy! Students are not required to annotate the texts unless they want to. We will teach students how to annotate during the first full literature unit in the fall.

Timing Your Summer Reading
Often, parents ask their children to do the summer reading right away—and with great intentions. However, the English Department has found that doing so makes it hard for us to have a detailed, meaningful discussion in the beginning of the school year. To the extent that your summer plans make it possible, please complete the summer reading in the latter half of summer vacation. *Night*, specifically, should be read last (right before returning in August, as previously mentioned). If students do read earlier, please encourage them to review their work just before classes begin. Thank you!

Recommendations and Notes on Book Selections

**Choice Reads**

*Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson
High school can be really tough. Melinda’s life changed after the end of the year party, and when she can’t talk about what happened, her friends assume the worst of her. It is only when her (ex) best friend is in danger that Melinda finds the courage to speak.

*Seraphina* by Rachel Hartman
In a land in which dragons can take human form, half-dragon Seraphina is an abomination who must hide her true nature. When Prince Rupert is murdered in a dragonlike fashion, tension heats up between dragons and humans, and Seraphina is caught in the middle—and falling in love with the wrong person.

*Climbing the Stairs* by Padma Venkatraman
In India during the last days of British rule before World War II, all Vidya wants is college. When her father is beaten senseless by the police and can no longer support their family, though, they must move in with her grandfather’s more traditional family, which forbids education for women. Vidya must find a way to keep her dream alive.

*Ship Breaker* by Paolo Bacigalupi
A desperately poor teen-aged scavenger is forced to make terrible, unthinkable choices in a
future world of drowned cities and killer storms where a tiny, rich elite control the few remaining resources.

*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon
An autistic 15-year-old math genius investigates the murder of his only friend, the neighbor’s poodle, uncovering a startling deception whose repercussions forever change his world.

*Nil* by Lynn Matson.
One moment 17-year-old Charley is in the parking lot of Target, and in the next moment there is a flash, searing pain she blanks out. When she awakens, she realizes that she has somehow been transported to a jungle island, and that she is not alone.

*Nervous Conditions* by Tsitsi Dangarembga
Tambu, a young teenage girl living in colonial Rhodesia of the 1960s, seizes the opportunity to leave her rural community to study at the missionary school run by her wealthy, British-educated uncle. As she comes of age and finds her voice, Tambu slowly reaches some painful conclusions—about her family, her proscribed role as a woman, and the inherent evils of colonization.

**Challenging/Mature Choice Reads**

*Debbie Harry Sings in French* by Meagan Brothers
After Johnny’s alcoholism lands him in rehab, his mother sends him to backwater South Carolina, where kids call him “fag” even though he’s straight. He keeps wishing he were “cool, tough, and beautiful” like Debbie Harry, lead singer for the ‘80s band Blondie. Then his kick-butt girlfriend teaches him to walk in heels, and everything changes.

*Parrotfish* by Ellen Wittliner
When Angela becomes Grady, life becomes a bit more complicated. With the help of both old friends and new, Grady is able to navigate school and get the better of the bullies who try to embarrass him.

*The Particular Sadness of Lemon Cake* by Aimee Bender
When is a magical gift a curse? Rose bites into homemade birthday cake on the eve of her 9th birthday and discovers that she can taste her mother’s emotions. Suddenly she knows far too much about the secrets that people usually hide from others.

*My Name is Asher Lev* by Chaim Potok
A young artist struggles between his creativity and the demands of his family and religious community when he is accused of blasphemy.

*Harp of Burma* by Michio Takeyama
Mizushima, a Japanese soldier fighting the British in Burma during WWII uses his love of music to encourage his fellow soldiers and to confound the enemies. Taken as prisoners of war by the British, his companions fear the worst when he doesn’t return from a secret mission.
Yellow Raft in Blue Water by Michael Dorris
Starting in the present day and moving backward, the novel is told in the voices of the three women: fifteen-year-old part-black Rayona; her American Indian mother, Christine, consumed by tenderness and resentment toward those she loves; and the fierce and mysterious Ida, mother and grandmother whose haunting secrets, betrayals, and dreams echo through the years, braiding together the strands of the shared past.