RANNEY SCHOOL

UPPER SCHOOL

SUMMER READING

Directions: All Ranney 9th grade and 10th grade Upper School students must read two books this summer. Both grade levels will have a communal read, a book that will be read and discussed in the fall by all members of your grade.

In addition, students will all make a choice of one additional book to read from three other selections. Both of your summer reads will be assessed and discussed upon your return to school during the first week of September.

All Ranney 11th grade and 12th grade students will read one book from a selection of four. If you have AP reading assignments, those are in addition to your one reading from this list.

The chosen titles represent diverse interests. The books include history, science, technology, modern culture, and literature. We hope you will enjoy your choices and recommend that you read more than two if you can. As always, if you are uncomfortable with the subject matter or language of your selection, pick one of the other choices.
GRADE 9

SUMMER READING SELECTIONS

All 9th Graders must read:

Sophie’s World: A Novel about the History of Philosophy-Jostein Gaarder

Sophie's World is a 1991 novel by Norwegian writer Jostein Gaarder. It follows the events of Sophie Amundsen, a teenage girl living in Norway, and Alberto Knox, a middle-aged philosopher who introduces her to philosophical thinking and the history of philosophy. A New York Times bestseller. (Reading Level 7.3/Interest Level 9+)

All 9th Graders must read one of the following:

A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier is a memoir written by Ishmael Beah, an author from Sierra Leone. The book is a firsthand account of Beah's time as a child soldier during the civil war in Sierra Leone. A #1 New York Times bestseller. (Reading Level 6.1/Interest Level 9+)

The Bean Trees

Barbara Kingsolver's 1988 debut novel is a classic work of American fiction. It follows the gritty, outspoken Taylor Greer, who leaves her native Kentucky to head west. She becomes mother to an abandoned baby and, when her jalopy dies in Tucson, is forced to work in a tire garage and to room with a young, battered divorcee who also has a little girl. (Reading Level 5.6/Interest Level 9+)

A Short History of Nearly Everything-Bill Bryson

In Bryson's biggest book, he 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. A national bestseller. (Reading Level 9.0/Interest Level 9+)
GRADE 10

SUMMER READING SELECTIONS

All 10th Graders must read:

*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* - Maya Angelou

*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* is a 1969 autobiography about the early years of American writer and poet Maya Angelou. It is a coming-of-age story that illustrates how strength of character and a love of literature can help overcome racism and trauma. (Reading Level 6.7/Interest Level 9+)

All 10th Graders must read one of the following:


*Reading Lolita in Teheran* is a memoir written by Azar Nafisi. Azar Nafisi’s luminous masterwork gives us a rare glimpse, from the inside, of women’s lives in revolutionary Iran. *Reading Lolita in Teheran* is a work of great passion and poetic beauty, a remarkable exploration of resilience in the face of tyranny, and a celebration of the liberating power of literature. More than 100 weeks on the New York Times bestseller list. Translated into 32 languages. (Reading Level 8.4/Interest Level 9+)

*Pigs in Heaven* - Barbara Kingsolver

Picking up where her modern classic *The Bean Trees* left off, Barbara Kingsolver’s bestselling *Pigs in Heaven* continues the tale of Turtle and Taylor Greer, a Native American girl and her adoptive mother who have settled in Tucson, Arizona, as they both try to overcome their difficult pasts. (Reading Level 5.4/Interest Level 9+)

*The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer* - Siddhartha Mukherjee

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize, and now a documentary from Ken Burns on PBS, *The Emperor of All Maladies* is a magnificent, profoundly humane “biography” of cancer—from its first documented appearances thousands of years ago through the epic battles in the twentieth century to cure, control, and conquer it to a radical new understanding of its essence. (Reading Level 9.0/Interest Level 9+)
All 11th and 12th Graders must read any one of the following:

**The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks** by Rebecca Skloot

From a single, abbreviated life grew a seemingly immortal line of cells that made some of the most crucial innovations in modern science possible. And from that same life, and those cells, Rebecca Skloot has fashioned *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* a fascinating and moving story of medicine and family, of how life is sustained in laboratories and in memory. A #1 *New York Times* bestseller. (Reading Level 8.0/Interest Level 9+)

**Salvage the Bones** by Jesmyn Ward tells the story of the Batiste family in Bois Sauvage, Mississippi, in the twelve days leading up to Hurricane Katrina. Claude Batiste’s wife, mother of Randall, Skeetah (Jason), Esch and Junior, died a few years ago, right after Junior was born. The kids still live with their father, in an area called the Pit. They are a poor, black family, who mainly survive on what Claude can make by salvaging and then selling scrap metal. Winner of the National Book Award. (Reading Level 5.3/Interest Level 9+)

**Speak** by Laurie Halse Anderson is a young adult novel that tells the story of Melinda, a high school freshman who is ostracized by her peers following a traumatic incident. Unable to verbalize what happened, Melinda nearly stops speaking altogether, expressing her voice through the art she produces for Mr. Freeman’s class. This expression slowly helps Melinda acknowledge what happened, face her problems, and recreate her identity. National Book Award Finalist. (Reading Level 4.5/Interest Level 7-12)

**Elon Musk: Tesla, Space X, and the Search for a Fantastic Future** by Ashlee Vance

Veteran technology journalist Ashlee Vance provides the first inside look into the extraordinary life and times of Silicon Valley’s most audacious entrepreneur. (Reading Level 7.0/Interest Level 9+)