**11th grade Summer Reading List**

**Non-Fiction**

*1. Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance* by Barack Obama

In this lyrical unsentimental and compelling memoir, the son of a black African father and a white American mother searches for a workable meaning to his life as a black American. It begins in New York, where Barack Obama learns that his father—a figure he knows more as a myth than as a man—has been killed in a car accident. This sudden death inspires an emotional odyssey—first to a small town in Kansas, from which he retraces the migration of his mother’s family to Hawaii, and then to Kenya, where he meets the African side of his family, confronts the bitter truth of his father’s life, and at last reconciles his divided inheritance.

*2. Wasted: A Memoir of Anorexia and Bulimia* by Marya Hornbacher

Eating disorders are frequently written about but rarely with such immediacy and candor. Hornbacher was only 23 years old when she wrote this book so there is no sense of her having distanced herself from the disease or its lingering effects on her. This, combined with her talent for writing, gives readers a real sense of the horror of anorexia and bulimia and their power to dominate an individual's life. The author was bulimic as a fourth grader and anorexic at age 15. She was hospitalized several times and institutionalized once. By 1993 she was attending college and working as a journalist. Her weight had dropped to 52 pounds and doctors in the emergency room gave her only a week to live. She left the hospital, decided she wanted to live, then walked back and signed herself in for treatment. This is not a quick or an easy read. Hornbacher talks about possible causes for the illnesses and describes feeling isolated, being in complete denial, and not wanting to change or fearing change, until she nearly died. Young people will connect with this compelling and authentic story.

*3. My War: Killing Time in Iraq* by Colby Buzzell

An underemployed, skateboarding party animal, Colby Buzzell traded a dead-end future for the army—and ended up as a machine gunner in Iraq. To make sense of the absurd and frightening events surrounding him, he started writing a blog about the war—and how it differed from the government’s official version. But as his blog’s popularity grew, Buzzell became the embedded reporter the Army couldn’t control—despite its often hilarious efforts to do so.

The result is an extraordinary narrative, rich with unforgettable scenes: the Iraqi woman crying uncontrollably during a raid on her home; the soldier too afraid to fight; the troops chain-smoking in a guard tower and counting tracer rounds; the first, fierce firefight against the “men in black.” Drawing comparisons to everything from Charles Bukowski to **Catch-22**, **My War** depicts a generation caught in a complicated and dangerous world—and marks the debut of a raw, remarkable new voice.

*4. One Bullet Away: The Making of a Marine Officer* by Nathaniel Fick

If the Marines are “the few, the proud,” Recon Marines are the fewest and the proudest. Nathaniel Fick’s career begins with a hellish summer at Quantico, after his junior year at Dartmouth. He leads a platoon in Afghanistan just after 9/11 and advances to the pinnacle—Recon—two years later, on the eve of war with Iraq. His vast skill set puts him in front of the front lines, leading twenty-two Marines into the deadliest conflict since Vietnam. He vows to bring all his men home safely, and to do so he’ll need more than his top-flight education. Fick unveils the process that makes Marine officers such legendary leaders and shares his hard-won insights into the differences between military ideals and military practice, which can mock those ideals.

In this deeply thoughtful account of what it’s like to fight on today’s front lines, Fick reveals the crushing pressure on young leaders in combat. Split-second decisions might have national consequences or horrible immediate repercussions, but hesitation isn’t an option. One Bullet Away never shrinks from blunt truths, but ultimately it is an inspiring account of mastering the art of war.

*5. A Stolen Life: A Memoir* by Jaycee Dugard

When Jaycee Dugard was eleven years old, she was abducted from a school bus stop within sight of her home in South Lake Tahoe, California. She was missing for more than eighteen years, held captive by Phillip Craig and Nancy Garrido, and gave birth to two daughters during her imprisonment. On August 26, 2009, Garrido showed up for a meeting with his parole officer; he brought Jaycee, her daughters, and his wife Nancy with him. Their unusual behavior raised suspicions and an investigation revealed the tent behind the Garridos’ home where Jaycee had been living for nearly two decades.

*A Stolen Life* was written by Jaycee herself and covers the period from the time of her abduction in 1991 up until the present. In her stark, compelling narrative, she opens up about what she experienced—and offers an extraordinary account of courage and resilience.

*6. From the Barrio to the Board Room* by Robert Renteria

With a new foreword, a new epilogue, and illustrations from the Mi Barrio comic book version, this new release of From the Barrio to the Board Room shares Robert Renteria's journey from East L.A. and gang and drug life to becoming VP of a publicly traded company, owner of his own businesses and now his work as a civic leader, empowering our nation's youth to stay in school, out of gangs and off drugs.

*7. The Good Soldiers* by David Finkel

It was the last-chance moment of the war. In January 2007, President George W. Bush announced a new strategy for Iraq. It became known as "the surge." Among those called to carry it out were the young, optimistic army infantry soldiers of the 2-16, the battalion nicknamed the Rangers. About to head to a vicious area of Baghdad, they decided the difference would be them.

Fifteen months later, the soldiers returned home — forever changed. The chronicle of their tour is gripping, devastating, and deeply illuminating for anyone with an interest in human conflict.  With *The* *Good Soldiers*, Pulitzer Prize-winning *r*eporter David Finkel has produced an eternal story — not just of the Iraq War, but of all wars, for all time.

*8. Rachel’s Tears: Spiritual Journey of Columbine Martyr* by Darrell Scott

The Columbine tragedy in April 1999 pierced the heart of our country. We later learned that the teenage killers specifically targeted Rachel Scott and mocked her Christian faith on their chilling, homemade videotapes. Rachel Scott died for her faith. Now her parents talk about Rachel's life and how they have found meaning in their daughter's martyrdom in the aftermath of the school shooting. *Rachel's Tears* comes from a heartfelt need to celebrate this young girl's life, to work through the grief and the questions of a nation, and to comfort those who have been touched by violence in our schools today. Using excerpts and drawings from Rachel's own journals, her parents offer a spiritual perspective on the Columbine tragedy and provide a vision of hope for preventing youth violence across the nation.

*9. Steve Jobs: The Man Who Thought Different* by Karen Blumenthal

From the start, his path was never predictable. Steve Jobs was given up for adoption at birth, dropped out of college after one semester, and at the age of twenty, created Apple in his parents' garage with his friend Steve Wozniack. Then came the core and hallmark of his genius--his exacting moderation for perfection, his counterculture life approach, and his level of taste and style that pushed all boundaries. A devoted husband, father, and Buddhist, he battled cancer for over a decade, became the ultimate CEO, and made the world want every product he touched.

*10. Me Talk Pretty One Day* by David Sedaris

One essay, punctuated by a conspicuous absence of s's and plurals, introduces the lisping young fifth-grader David "Thedarith," who arms himself with a thesaurus, learns every nonsibilant word in the lexicon, eludes his wily speech therapy teacher, and amazes his countrified North Carolina teachers with his out-of-nowhere and man-size vocabulary.

By an ironic twist of fate, readers find present-day Sedaris in France, where only now, after all these years, he must cling safely to just plural nouns so as to avoid assigning the wrong genders to French objects. (Never mind that ordering items from the grocer becomes rather expensive.) Even the strictest of grammarians won't be able to look at the parts of speech in the same way after exposing themselves to the linguistic phenomena of Sedarisian humor. Just why is a sandwich masculine, and yet, say, a belt is feminine in the French language? As he stealthily tries to decode French, like a cross between a housewife and a shrewddetective, he earns the contempt of his sadistic French teacher and soon even resorts to listening to American books on tape for secret relief.

What David Sedaris has to say about language classes, his brother's gangsta-rap slang, typewriters, computers, audiobooks, movies, and even restaurant menus is sure to unleash upon the world a mad rash of pocket-dictionary-toting nouveau grammarians who bow their heads to a new, inverted word order.

**Fiction**

*1. City of Thieves* by David Benioff

During the Nazis’ brutal siege of Leningrad, Lev Beniov is arrested for looting and thrown into the same cell as a handsome deserter named Kolya. Instead of being executed, Lev and Kolya are given a shot at saving their own lives by complying with an outrageous directive: secure a dozen eggs for a powerful Soviet colonel to use in his daughter’s wedding cake. In a city cut off from all supplies and suffering unbelievable deprivation, Lev and Kolya embark on a hunt through the dire lawlessness of Leningrad and behind enemy lines to find the impossible.

By turns insightful and funny, thrilling and terrifying, *City of Thieves* is a gripping, cinematic World War II adventure and an intimate coming-of-age story with an utterly contemporary feel for how boys become men.

*2. Bluefish* by Pat Schmatz

**Thirteen-year-old Travis has a secret: he can't read. But a shrewd teacher and a sassy girl are about to change everything in this witty and deeply moving novel.**

Travis is missing his old home in the country, and he's missing his old hound, Rosco. Now there's just the cramped place he shares with his well-meaning but alcoholic grandpa, a new school, and the dreaded routine of passing when he's called on to read out loud. But that's before Travis meets Mr. McQueen, who doesn't take "pass" for an answer—a rare teacher whose savvy persistence has Travis slowly unlocking a book on the natural world. And it's before Travis is noticed by Velveeta, a girl whose wry banter and colorful scarves belie some hard secrets of her own. With sympathy, humor, and disarming honesty, Pat Schmatz brings to life a cast of utterly believable characters—and captures the moments of trust and connection that make all the difference.

*3. Divergent* by Veronica Roth

In Beatrice Prior's dystopian Chicago world, society is divided into five factions, each dedicated to the cultivation of a particular virtue—Candor (the honest), Abnegation (the selfless), Dauntless (the brave), Amity (the peaceful), and Erudite (the intelligent). On an appointed day of every year, all sixteen-year-olds must select the faction to which they will devote the rest of their lives. For Beatrice, the decision is between staying with her family and being who she really is—she can't have both. So she makes a choice that surprises everyone, including herself.

During the highly competitive initiation that follows, Beatrice renames herself Tris and struggles alongside her fellow initiates to live out the choice they have made. Together they must undergo extreme physical tests of endurance and intense psychological simulations, some with devastating consequences. As initiation transforms them all, Tris must determine who her friends really are—and where, exactly, a romance with a sometimes fascinating, sometimes exasperating boy fits into the life she's chosen. But Tris also has a secret, one she's kept hidden from everyone because she's been warned it can mean death. And as she discovers unrest and growing conflict that threaten to unravel her seemingly perfect society, she also learns that her secret might help her save those she loves . . . or it might destroy her.

*4. Witch and Wizard* by James Patterson

The world is changing: the government has seized control of every aspect of society, and now, kids are disappearing. For 15-year-old Wisty and her older brother Whit, life turns upside down when they are torn from their parents one night and slammed into a secret prison for no reason they can comprehend. The New Order, as it is known, is clearly trying to suppress Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Being a Normal Teenager. But while trapped in this totalitarian nightmare, Wisty and Whit discover they have incredible powers they'd never dreamed of. Can this newly minted witch and wizard master their skills in time to save themselves, their parents--and maybe the world?

*5. Whale Talk* by Chris Crutcher

A varsity letter jacket: it's exclusive, nearly unattainable, revered . . . and everything that's screwed up about Cutter High, as far as T. J. Jones is concerned. That's why T. J. is determined to have the Cutter All Night Mermen—the unlikeliest swim team a high school has ever seen—earn letter jackets of their own.

It won't be easy. For one thing, they don't even have a pool. They will fight for their dignity, they will fight with each other, and sometimes they will just fight. And then they will realize that a single moment can bring lifelong heartache or lifelong friendship. For T. J. and his crew of misfits, the quest may be far more valuable than the reward.

*6. Outside the Box* by Dan Allosso

Teenager Reid Anderson knows there's something wrong with society, otherwise he wouldn't feel so alienated. He has a problem with authority but can't decide: "am I antisocial or does society suck?" So he goes through life pretending he doesn't care.

A new Wii console and simulation game show up in his rec room, and Reid is just bored enough to try them out. When a demon from inside the game threatens him in reality, Reid is plunged into a world of troubled teens he didn't know existed. The demon's challenge takes him on a journey of discovery. Suddenly exposed to other outsiders, Reid learns to question authority and find his own answers. He finds true friends among those labeled defective and cast aside by society – and together, they learn to fight for themselves.

*7. The Fault in Our Stars* by John Green

Despite the tumor-shrinking medical miracle that has bought her a few years, Hazel has never been anything but terminal, her final chapter inscribed upon diagnosis. But when a gorgeous plot twist named Augustus Waters suddenly appears at Cancer Kid Support Group, Hazel’s story is about to be completely rewritten.  
  
Insightful, bold, irreverent, and raw, The Fault in Our Stars is award-winning-author John Green’s most ambitious and heartbreaking work yet, brilliantly exploring the funny, thrilling, and tragic business of being alive and in love.

*8. House Rules* by Jodi Picoult

Jacob Hunt is a teenage boy with Asperger's syndrome. He's hopeless at reading social cues or expressing himself well to others, and like many kids with AS, Jacob has a special focus on one subject — in his case, forensic analysis. He's always showing up at crime scenes, thanks to the police scanner he keeps in his room, and telling the cops what they need to do...and he's usually right. But then his town is rocked by a terrible murder and, for a change, the police come to Jacob with questions. All of the hallmark behaviors of Asperger's — not looking someone in the eye, stimulatory tics and twitches, flat affect — can look a lot like guilt to law enforcement personnel. Suddenly, Jacob and his family, who only want to fit in, feel the spotlight shining directly on them. For his mother, Emma, it's a brutal reminder of the intolerance and misunderstanding that always threaten her family. For his brother, Theo, it's another indication of why nothing is normal because of Jacob. And over this small family the soul-searing question looms: Did Jacob commit murder?

9. *Home of the Braves* by David Klass

As Joe Brickman heads into the fall of his senior year, he's looking forward to the soccer season, when he will captain the Lawndale team. And surely this will be the year when he and his neighbor Kristine stop teasing each other and begin dating. But scary, unpredictable things start happening at Lawndale High. It's hard to tell what touches off the storm. Is it the arrival of Antonio Silva, a.k.a. the Phenom, a Brazilian soccer star who transforms the Lawndale Braves into a contender, and in doing so clashes with football players? Is it the shake-up of the social order in the school, when the Phenom starts dating Kris, and soccer becomes the "in" sport? Is it the brutal humiliation of Joe's best friend, Ed "the Mouse" McBean, and is Ed planning on taking some dark revenge on the entire school? Perhaps it's all of these new twists, and something older. As violence and danger escalate and school officials clamp down with zero tolerance, Joe finds himself searching for the courage to break free from the forces that threaten to take him down with the home of the Braves.

10. *Raising Stony Mayhill* by Daryl Gregory

In 1968, after the first zombie outbreak, Wanda Mayhall and her three young daughters discover the body of a teenage mother during a snowstorm. Wrapped in the woman’s arms is a baby, stone-cold, not breathing, and without a pulse. But then his eyes open and look up at Wanda—and he begins to move.  
  
The family hides the child—whom they name Stony—rather than turn him over to authorities that would destroy him. Against all scientific reason, the undead boy begins to grow. For years his adoptive mother and sisters manage to keep his existence a secret—until one terrifying night when Stony is forced to run and he learns that he is not the only living dead boy left in the world.