

Colonie Central High School
1 Raider Blvd.
Albany, NY 12205

June, 2010

Dear English 9 Students and Parents:

Reading is one of the most valuable and pleasurable habits you can develop. Much of our class time together next year will be spent reading, discussing and writing about what we read.

As an incoming ninth grader, you are to read the novel The Pearl by John Steinbeck over the course of the summer. Our first unit of study will be based on The Pearl. You will be tested on this novel at the end of September. The English Department strongly recommends that you complete the following procedures in order to successfully complete the required summer reading assignment:

1. List the main characters, and write a description of each.
2. Outline the Plot.
3. Identify themes

In addition to The Pearl, you are also required to read a free choice book of at least 150 pages. This book should **not** be anything you read in middle school. Furthermore, you may not select any of the following since these are books commonly read in ninth grade:

A Separate Peace
Animal Farm
Left to Tell

Monster
Night
Speak

The House on Mango Street
The Contender
To Kill a Mockingbird

Attached, you will find a list of **suggested** reading choices from a number of literary genres. In addition to reading your free choice, you **must** select **1** of the projects and follow the directions given. Your teacher will explain the project further in September.

Enjoy your summer! We look forward to meeting with you in September!

Sincerely,

The English Department

English 9 Summer Reading

Note Taking Guidelines

During the reading of your free choice, you will be asked to take notes. Below is a list of guided questions for you to answer while you are reading. Be sure to include as many specific details from the novel as you can. You are required to respond to all of these questions, but you are not limited to the following ideas:

- Describe the setting (time, place, historical context). Be as specific as possible.
- State the protagonist (main character).
 - Describe the protagonist using three character traits.
 - Support each trait with examples from the text
 - Ex. Scrooge, from “A Christmas Carol,” is portrayed as a miserly, miserable, cheap, old man. He makes a lot of money but does not spend it on himself, his family, or his employees.
- Explain the protagonist’s relationship(s) with at least two other characters in the novel.
- Describe the major conflict(s) in the novel.
 - Explain how the conflict(s) impacts the outcome of the novel.
 - Explain how the conflict(s) impacts the protagonist’s relationship to other characters.
 - Explain how the conflict(s) directly impacts the protagonist’s life.
- Summarize the novel by identifying the basic elements of the plot.
 - Include rising action, climax, resolution
- In your own words, explain the theme(s) (main idea or message) of the novel.
 - Use specific examples from the text to support your ideas

*** In September you will be asked to complete one of the following projects using your notes. Therefore, make sure your note taking is detailed and thorough. Your teacher will provide you with more information on these assignments during the first week of school.**

A Graphic Novel: You will be responsible for creating a graphic depiction of all or parts of your novel.

Video Project: You will be asked to create a video expressing your knowledge and understanding of the novel. Some options **may** include: A breaking news story, movie trailer, or a talk-show interview.

Book Talk: You will prepare and deliver a 3-5 minute oral presentation demonstrating your knowledge and understanding of the novel.

Journal Entries: You will take on the persona of the protagonist and write from his/her perspective about events and other characters in the novel.

Ninth Grade Summer Reading

Science Fiction

The Adoration of Jenna Fox by Mary E. Pearson

Seventeen-year-old Jenna Fox wakes up from a coma to find she is quite changed...and illegal. Set in future California, in a post-apocalyptic society that has banned bioengineering (an apocalypse brought about in large part by human interference with nature), Jenna learns how far parents will go to save their own child. Themes in the book include loneliness, friendship, pressures on teens, and environmental issues resulting from bioengineering.

Bunker 10 by J. A. Henderson

Brilliant kids, army research, virtual reality and video gaming plus time travel...need more?

As the book opens, a top secret bunker in a remote mountains explodes, killing the children and teens who have been working there to develop virtual reality training videos for the army, but are they really dead? Are they really real, or are they all just part of the virtual reality scenarios? Contains lots of action.

Carbon Diaries: 2010 by Saci Lloyd

Told in short diary entries filled with scrapbook clippings, this riveting eco-thriller is one girl's attempt to stay grounded in a world where disaster has become the norm. It's the year 2015, a time when global warming has begun to ravage the environment. In response, the United Kingdom becomes the first country to mandate carbon rationing—a well-intentioned plan that goes tragically awry. Sixteen-year-old Laura is just trying to survive her teen years: exams, family craziness, and keeping her punk band going. But then there's the carbon rationing, the crazy weather that causes life-threatening natural disasters, and the disintegration of her family unit. It isn't easy being eco-friendly.

Everlost by Neal Shusterman

Allie and Nick die when the cars they're riding in collide on a remote road in a "dead" forest in upstate New York. They "bump" into each other on their way to the light and wind up in an in-between world filled with the souls of children who were not ready or able to cross over into the next world. The "ghosts" of the World Trade Center plays a central role in the story, and some themes dealt with are loneliness, will power, decision making, adventure, and loss.

Firestorm: The Caretaker Trilogy (Book One) by David Klass

Jack Dennison, 17, is an exceptional student-athlete whose parents want him to be mediocre. They want him to remain average and unnoticed, but when he sets a new rushing record on his high school football team, the media finds him, and so do creatures who have come from 1,000 years in the future to kill him. He discovers that his whole life has been a lie, one devised to protect him. In one night he loses his "family," his home, and his sense of identity. He gradually learns that he is the Great Hope for a future Earth held hostage by one evil man who controls all that's left of the world's natural resources. This book combines environmental responsibility with time travel and teen feelings of alienation, belonging and self-realization.

I Was a Teenage Popsicle by Bev Katz Rosenbaum

Sixteen-year-old Floe contracted a deadly lung disease and her parents had her "frozen" hoping that a cure would be found. Ten years later she's awake. Her crush is the only other person brought back, her younger sister is now her legal guardian, and there's a political movement to shut down the center that saved her and where her parents are "frozen" and waiting to be "reawakened."

Interworld by Neil Gaiman and Michael Reaves

Joey Harker always gets lost in his own world, but it turns out he's a "Walker." He accidentally discovers that he can walk between parallel universes. He meets several versions of himself. Each of them a Walker from their own universe, and discovers how the choices we make can influence the future we will have. Armies of magic and science run up against an army of different versions of Joe Harkers. A challenging book.

The Knife of Never Letting Go (Chaos Walking, Book One) By Patrick Ness

Todd Hewitt is the last boy in Prentissstown. On a planet where settlers have come to escape a chaotic and hopeless world, their world becomes just that. In a town where only males have survived, the men and animals alike can read each other's thoughts. The overwhelming effect of this phenomenon is called "Noise." Todd is the last male child, destined to become a "man" in one month on his thirteenth birthday. As his birthday approaches, he discovers a "hole in the Noise" and finds a girl, an orphan. This sets off a chain of events that leave Todd, the girl, and his talking dog, Manchee, running for their lives and for the future of this new world. There's a ton of action and some rather gory violence as Todd fights to save his life, the girl's and to find out the truth about the history of Prentissstown.

Maximum Ride: The Angel Experiment by James Patterson

The book is set in the near future and centers around the "flock," a group of human-avian hybrids (98% human, 2% bird) on the run from the scientists who created them. It focuses on Maximum Ride (Max), the leader of the "flock," and the first-person narrator of the story. Their ability to fly enables them to escape the institute where they were created, but they soon find themselves lost in an unfamiliar world of ordinary people. They stick together, until the ERASERS (other mutant children from the same secret facility who turn into werewolves with superhuman strength) find them, and the chase/battle/search for their origins begins.

Midnighters; The Secret Hour (Book One of a Trilogy) by Scott Westerfeld

Big city Chicago girl Jessica Day moves to small town Bixby, Oklahoma and strange things begin to happen. She learns that anyone born near the hour of midnight gets to experience "the secret hour," at 12 am time stops for everyone else, and for one hour only the "Midnighters" and the ancient creatures who occupy that hour roam the town. The characters discover special powers, have cool/scary adventures, and deal with teen feelings.

Sports Fiction

7 Days at the Hot Corner by Terry Trueman. During a baseball game, high school student, Scott, accidentally touches the blood of a fellow player with HIV. He has to wait seven days for his own test results to come back. During that wait he examines his feelings about many topics.

Game by Walter Dean Myers. Drew is a superstar on his high school basketball team. That is until another player starts to take Drew's "spotlight." He must work hard to save his college prospects.

Slam! By Walter Dean Myers. A star basketball player living in the inner city tries to perfect his talent as a way of escaping his surroundings and finding a better life.

Off Season by Catherine Gilbert Murdock. D.J. helps run her family cattle farm. She is also the only girl on her high school's football team. A coming of age story about a girl dealing with family problems, best friend problems, and the spotlight of being a girl linebacker. This is the sequel to Dairy Queen, which is taught in some eighth grade English classes.

Stotan! by Chris Crutcher. A group of high school swimmers attend a weekend of rigorous training and learn about each other and themselves.

Born In Sin by Evelyn Coleman. Keisha, attending an urban rescue program for teens in poverty, is trying to become an Olympic swimmer, escape her difficult life, and prove her doubters wrong.

Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes by Chris Crutcher. Eric is torn between losing weight and getting in shape to be a part of his high school swim team and trying to help his friend, Sarah, with her mental health issues. In a novel that contains many adult topics, Eric tries to maintain his own well being while he attends a friend's needs.

Historical Fiction

Year of Wonders by Geraldine Brooks

When an infected piece of cloth carries the plague from London to an isolated mountain village, an unlikely hero emerges in a housemaid named Anna Frith. Through her eyes, in 1666, we watch as her fellow villagers make the choice to quarantine themselves in hopes of stopping the spread. However, as death finds its way into every household, the villagers turn from prayer and medicine to sorcery and witch hunting. Anna is forced to struggle with her dying family, the destruction of the community, and the onset of a newly found love. This novel is based on the true story of Eyam, a village in the mountainous region of England.

Funny in Farsi by Firoozeh Dumas

The true story of Firoozeh Dumas, her family, and their immigration from Iran to Southern California. In 1972, Firoozeh's father decides to move the family from Iran to Southern California based off his memories of his graduate school years. With no prior knowledge of the country or culture, the family must adjust to a new life in a new place. The novel portrays the encounters of her father the engineer; her mother, who never fully learns English; her uncle, who is obsessed with fast food and weight loss gimmicks; and Firoozeh, who changes her name to Julie and attempts to find her own identity. The novel mixes in laughs, family love, and the themes of identity and discovering oneself.

Zoya's Story by Zoya, with John Follain and Rita Cristofari.

Despite being only 23 years old, Zoya has witnessed more horrific events than most would care to in 10 lifetimes. Growing up in the war ravaged country of Afghanistan, Zoya is stripped of her parents when they are murdered by Muslim fundamentalists. In response, she flees with her grandmother to Pakistan. She joins the Revolutionary Association of Women of

Afghanistan and challenges the rules of Taliban government. This novel also chronicles her heroic attempts to journey back to her homeland and help oppressed women battle practices like: public stoning, whipping, burqa wearing, and the forbidding of female workers. This novel guides us through the horrific practices of the Taliban and Mujahideen.

Flags of Our Father's by James Bradley and Ron Powers

This novel chronicles the story behind one of the most famous photographs ever taken during WWII; the raising of the flag at Iwo Jima. James Bradley, son of one of the flag raisers, travels back to Iwo Jima to place a memorial in his father's memory. He uncovers the story of how a photograph, one which the photographer wasn't even sure he got, turned into a global phenomenon. The photo provided hope for a nation and claimed that Americans had won a battle that hadn't yet begun. It is a tale of bravery, inspiration, patriotism, and pays its respects to one of this nation's greatest generations.

Nonfiction

Flying to the Moon: An Astronaut's Story by Michael Collins

Collins is a former American astronaut and test pilot. Selected as part of the third group of fourteen astronauts in 1963, he flew in space twice. His first spaceflight was *Gemini 10*, in which he and command pilot John Young performed two rendezvous with different spacecraft and Collins undertook two EVA's his second spaceflight was as the command module pilot for *Apollo 11*. While he orbited the moon, Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin made the first manned landing on the lunar surface. He is one of only 24 humans to have flown to the moon.

Hole in My Life by Jack Gantos

In the summer of 1971, Jack Gantos was an aspiring writer desperate for adventure, college cash and a way out of a dead-end-job. For ten thousand dollars, he recklessly agrees to help sail a sixty-foot yacht loaded with hashish from the Virgin Islands to New York City. Gantos is caught and sentenced to serve six years in prison

In this novel, the author confronts the period of struggle and confinement that marked the end of his own youth. Running beneath the surface of the action in this novel is the story of how Gantos—once he found himself locked up in a small, yellow-walled cell—moved from wanting to be a writer to writing, and how this newfound dedication helped him endure the worst experience of his life.

Inside Delta Force: The story of America's Elite Counterterrorist Unit by Eric Haney

For more than twenty years, Command Sergeant Major Eric L. Haney served in the United States Army's most demanding combat units: as a Combat Infantryman, as a Ranger, and ultimately as a founding member and eight-year veteran of the Army's super secret counter-terrorism arm, Delta Force.

REALISTIC FICTION

Hate List by Jennifer Brown

At the end of her junior year, Valerie Leftman's boyfriend, Nick, kills six students and a teacher and wounds many others. Valerie and Nick had created a "hate list," but she had no idea it would actually be used to target people as victims. For her, the list was a way to ease the pain of being bullied and to help her deal with the constant fighting between her parents. Although Valerie is never arrested for the crime, many people in her community, including her parents, have a hard time believing that she is not at fault, too.

The Truth About Forever by Sara Dessen

Sixteen-year-old Macy witnessed her father's death, but never really figured out how to mourn the loss. Instead, she avoids it by always staying in control – perfect grades, perfect boyfriend, perfect appearance. Then, she gets a job at “Wish Catering.” It is run by pregnant, forgetful Delia and staffed by her nephews, Bert and Wes, and her neighbors Kristy and Monica. Here, through a series of events, Macy slowly learns it is okay to not be perfect.

Twisted by Laurie Halse Anderson

After being sentenced to a summer of character-building physical labor, Tyler Miller thinks his senior year of high school is going to be a year like no other. Over the summer, Tyler built muscles he never had before and, as a result, his reputation at school receives a boost. He starts dating popular Bethany Milbury, sister of his tormentor, Chip, and daughter of his father's boss. Despite his newly found popularity, all too quickly, Tyler's life spirals out of control.

Fat Cat by Robin Brande

High school junior Catherine "Cat" Locke is overweight and super-smart. For the sake of a science fair project, she gives up cars, phones, TV, computers, and processed foods in her determination to win this year's competition. As a result, she loses quite a bit of weight. After Cat's “new look” attracts several boys' attention, she decides to expand her project to observe the effects on herself and others.

3 NB's of Julian Drew by James Deem

Written in a series of notebook entries, the story focuses on an abused teenager, Julian. He fights a heroic battle against dealing with his mother's death and surviving the mistreatment of his vicious stepmother. Julian's notebook is his only means out of his loneliness and pain.

Gym Candy by Carl Deuker

Having grown up in the shadow of his father's failed NFL career, high-school football player Mick Johnson is determined not to make the same mistakes. But when he's tackled just short of the goal in a pivotal game, he decides that vitamin supplements aren't enough and begins purchasing "gym candy," or steroids, from the trainer at his local gym. His performance begins to improve, yet his secret ultimately comes out and has devastating results.

Fantasy

The Sea of Trolls, by Nancy Farmer

Three time Newbery honor author Nancy Farmer's epic fantasy, *The Sea of Trolls*, is gigantic in every way. There are big Vikings and bigger trolls. There are big themes--hope, despair, life and death. At a substantial 450+ pages, the sheer size of this hefty tome is impressive. But, like all of Farmer's fine work, the large scale has room for enormous quantities of heart and humor. At the center of this massive adventure is a small Saxon boy named Jack, who's never been much good at anything until the Bard of his medieval village makes him an apprentice. Then, just as Jack is learning to tap into and control his power, he is kidnapped (along with his little sister, Lucy) and taken to the court of King Ivar the Boneless and his half troll queen Frith. When one of Jack's amateur spells causes the evil queen's beautiful hair to fall out, he is forced to undertake a dangerous quest across the Sea of Trolls to make things right, or suffer the consequences--the sacrifice of his beloved sister to Frith's patron goddess, Freya. Along the way Jack faces everything from giant golden troll-bears to man-eating spiders, yet each frightening encounter brings wisdom and understanding to the budding young Bard.

The Shadow Thieves, by Anne Ursu

With a wit and cynicism that will enchant most readers, Ursu weaves an extraordinary tale filled with Greek gods, sick and shadowless children, and a plot to overthrow the Lord of the Dead. Charlotte Mielszewski is in such a bad mood that she doesn't notice a freakish man in a tuxedo following her home from school. But something extraordinary is about to happen. Charlotte's cousin Zee lives in England, where all of his friends are becoming mysteriously and seriously ill. Sent to Charlotte's family in America, he discovers that the same thing is happening to his new friends. It turns out that Philonecron, born in the Underworld, is determined to overthrow Hades and builds an army from children's stolen shadows, getting at them through Zee. The quick-paced novel takes readers on a danger-filled journey from the Midwest to Hades, where Charlotte and Zee make their final stand against the evil threatening to destroy the world of the dead.

The Hobbit (The Lord of the Rings Trilogy), by J.R.R. Tolkien

"In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit. Not a nasty, dirty, wet hole, filled with the ends of worms and an oozy smell, nor yet a dry, bare, sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down on or to eat: it was a hobbit-hole, and that means comfort."

The hobbit-hole in question belongs to one Bilbo Baggins, an upstanding member of a "little people, about half our height, and smaller than the bearded dwarves." He is, like most of his kind, well off, well fed, and best pleased when sitting by his own fire with a pipe, a glass of good beer, and a meal to look forward to. Certainly this particular hobbit is the last person one would expect to see set off on a hazardous journey; indeed, when Gandalf the Grey stops by one morning, "looking for someone to share in an adventure," Baggins fervently wishes the wizard elsewhere. No such luck, however; soon 13 fortune-seeking dwarves have arrived on the hobbit's doorstep in search of a burglar, and before he can even grab his hat or an umbrella, Bilbo Baggins is swept out his door and into a dangerous adventure. The dwarves' goal is to return to their ancestral home in the Lonely Mountains and reclaim a stolen fortune from the dragon Smaug. Along the way, they and their reluctant companion meet giant spiders, hostile elves, ravaging wolves--and, most perilous of all, a subterranean creature named Gollum from whom Bilbo wins a magical ring in a riddling contest.

Memoirs

Angela's Ashes by Frank McCourt

Angela's Ashes is Frank McCourt's Pulitzer Prize-winning autobiography about life in a depressingly dark, gloomy, and poverty-ridden Limerick, Ireland. Young Frank, who was born in Brooklyn and raised in Ireland, tells of an often-sick yet caring mother, a poetic often-unemployed father and an unyielding love between his brothers amidst the worst poverty imaginable. Through work and writing, McCourt is allowed to set sail to America.

The Glass Castle by Jeanette Walls

The Glass Castle is a remarkable memoir of resilience and redemption, and a revelatory look into a family at once deeply dysfunctional and uniquely vibrant. When sober, Jeannette's brilliant and charismatic father captured his children's imagination, teaching physics, geology, and how to embrace life fearlessly. But when he drank, he was dishonest and destructive. Her mother was a free spirit who abhorred the idea of domesticity and didn't want the responsibility of raising a family. The Walls children learned to take care of themselves. They fed, clothed, and protected one another, and eventually found their way to New York. Their parents followed them, choosing to be homeless even as their children prospered.

Bad Boy by Walter Dean Myers

As a boy, Walter Dean Myers was quick-tempered and physically strong, always ready for a fight. He also read voraciously—he would check out books from the library and carry them home, hidden in brown paper bags in order to avoid other boys' teasing. He aspired to be a writer. But growing up in a poor family in Harlem, his hope for a successful future diminished as he came to realize fully the class and racial struggles that surrounded him. He began to doubt himself and the values that he had always relied on, attending high school less and less, turning to the streets and his books for comfort. In a memoir that is gripping, funny, and ultimately unforgettable, Walter Dean Myers travels back to his roots in the magical world of Harlem during the 1940s and 1950s. Here is the story of one of the strongest voices in young people's literature today.