

One School, Many Books: Revising Summer Reading

Please review the following list of books and select *one* book to read this summer. The adults in the WRA community--faculty, administrative faculty, and staff--have selected books they would like to read and discuss with you on the first day of school, following a special schedule, in the fall. We have deliberately not associated a book with the adult who will lead the discussion so that you choose your book based on the book. Titles are arranged in two sections--fiction and nonfiction, with a brief description.

When distributed, fill out the Google form with your selection. You are required to select a book, and the librarians will verify you have made a selection when you fill out the year-end sign out sheet.

You will note that some books are available in languages other than English. You may read in whatever language you choose; however, please do know that the discussions on the first day will be in English.

Nonfiction selections begin on page 8.

Fiction

Ines del Alma Mia

Isabel Allende

In the early years of the conquest of the Americas, Inés Suárez, a seamstress condemned to a life of toil, flees Spain to seek adventure in the New World. As Inés makes her way to Chile, she begins a romance with Pedro de Valdivia, war hero and field marshal to the famed Francisco Pizarro. Together the lovers will build the new city of Santiago, and they will wage war against the indigenous Chileans—a bloody struggle that will change Inés and Valdivia forever, inexorably pulling each of them toward separate destinies.

I, Robot

Isaac Asimov

With three, simple directives, Isaac Asimov changed our perception of robots forever when he formulated the laws governing their behavior. In *I, Robot*, Asimov chronicles the development of the robot through a series of interlinked stories: from its primitive origins in the present to its ultimate perfection in the not-so-distant future—a future in which humanity itself may be rendered obsolete.

People of the Book

Geraldine Brooks

Inspired by a true story, *People of the Book* is a novel tracing the harrowing journey of the famed Sarajevo Haggadah, a beautifully illuminated Hebrew manuscript created in fifteenth-century Spain. When it falls to Hanna Heath, an Australian rare-book expert, to conserve this priceless work, the series of tiny artifacts she discovers in its ancient binding—an insect wing fragment, wine stains, salt crystals, a white hair—only begin to

unlock its deep mysteries and unexpectedly plunges Hanna into the intrigues of fine art forgers and ultra-nationalist fanatics.

In Sunlight, In a Beautiful Garden

Kathleen Cambor

In Sunlight, in a Beautiful Garden is a romantic fiction that takes place in the backdrop of the Johnstown, Pennsylvania, flood -- a tragedy that cost some 2,200 lives when the South Fork Dam burst on Memorial Day weekend, 1889. The dam was the site of a gentlemen's club that attracted some of the wealthiest industrialists of the day -- Henry Clay Frick, Andrew Mellon, and Andrew Carnegie -- and served as a summertime idyll for the families of the rich. It is a bittersweet story about a romance during adversity.

A Season in the Congo

Aimé Césaire

Renowned poet and political activist Aimé Césaire recounts the tragic death of Patrice Lumumba, the first prime minister of the Congo Republic and an African nationalist hero, in his play *A Season in the Congo*. The play follows Lumumba's efforts to free the Congolese from Belgian rule and the political struggles that led to his assassination in 1961. Lumumba is depicted as a Christ-like figure with commitment to pan-Africanism.

My Brilliant Friend

Elena Ferrante

My Brilliant Friend is a generous-hearted story about two friends, Elena and Lila. The story begins in the 1950s, in a poor but vibrant neighborhood on the outskirts of Naples. As they grow and their paths repeatedly diverge and converge, Elena and Lila remain best friends whose respective destinies are reflected and refracted in the other. Through the lives of these two women, Ferrante tells the story of a neighborhood, a city, and a country as it is transformed in ways that, in turn, also transform their relationship.

In the Heart of the Heart of the Country: And Other Stories

William H. Gass

The two novellas and three short stories it contains are all set in the Midwest, and together they offer a mythical reimagining of America's heartland, with its punishing extremes of heat and cold, its endless spaces and claustrophobic households, its hidden and baffled desires, its lurking threat of violence. Exploring and expanding the limits of the short story, Gass works magic with words, words that are as squirming, regal, and unexpected as the roaches, boys, icicles, neighbors, and neuroses that fill these pages, words that shock, dazzle, illumine, and delight.

Water for Elephants

Sara Gruen

Though he may not speak of them, the memories still dwell inside Jacob Jankowski's ninety-something-year-old mind. Memories of himself as a young man, tossed by fate onto a rickety train that was home to the Benzini Brothers Most Spectacular Show on Earth. Memories of a world filled with freaks and clowns, with wonder and pain and anger and passion; a world with its own narrow, irrational rules, its own way of life, and

its own way of death. The world of the circus: to Jacob it was both salvation and a living hell.

The Ragged Edge of Night

Elizabeth Hawker

Germany, 1942. Franciscan friar Anton Starzmann is stripped of his place in the world when his school is seized by the Nazis. He relocates to a small German hamlet to wed Elisabeth Herter, a widow who seeks a marriage—in name only—to a man who can help raise her three children. As Anton struggles to adapt to the roles of husband and father, he learns of the Red Orchestra, an underground network of resisters plotting to assassinate Hitler, and joins the army of shadows. But when the SS discovers his schemes, Anton will embark on a final act of defiance that may cost him his life—even if it means saying goodbye to the family he has come to love more than he ever believed possible.

Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine: A Novel

Gail Honeyman

#1 New York Times Bestseller and A Reese Witherspoon Book Club Pick. *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine* is the smart, warm, and uplifting story of an out-of-the-ordinary heroine whose deadpan weirdness and unconscious wit make for an irresistible journey.

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest

Ken Kesey

Set in an Oregon mental facility, Nurse Ratched rules her ward with a strict and unbending routine, unopposed by her patients. But her regime is disrupted by the arrival of McMurphy – the swaggering, fun-loving trickster with a devilish grin who resolves to oppose her rules on behalf of his fellow inmates. Ken Kesey's extraordinary first novel is an exuberant, ribald and devastatingly honest portrayal of the boundaries between sanity and madness.

The Longshot

Katie Kitamura

A brilliant, spare debut novel that follows a former mixed martial arts star and his longtime coach over the course of three fraught days as they prepare for his momentous comeback match. In taut, rhythmic language, Katie Kitamura—a journalist who has followed MMA for years—renders the urgency, discipline, and mutual affection of athlete and coach with depth and subtlety. As an excruciating tension builds toward the final electrifying scene, their plight becomes our plight, the looming fight becomes every challenge each of us has ever taken on, however uncertain the outcome.

The Music of What Happens

Bill Konigsberg

Max: Chill. Sports. Video games. Gay and not a big deal, not to him, not to his mom, not to his buddies. And a secret: An encounter with an older kid that makes it hard to breathe, one that he doesn't want to think about, ever.

Jordan: The opposite of chill. Poetry. His "wives" and the Chandler Mall. Never been kissed and searching for Mr. Right, who probably won't like him anyway. And a secret: A spiraling out of control mother, and the knowledge that he's the only one who can keep the family from falling apart.

Over the course of one summer, two boys will have to face their biggest fears and decide what they're willing to risk -- to get the thing they want the most.

三体 (The Three-Body Problem)

Cixin Liu

The winner of 2015 Hugo Award. Winner of the Nebula Award. It tells a story set against the backdrop of China's Cultural Revolution. Back in those days, Hongan, a secret military project, aiming to explore outer space civilization and establish contact with aliens, had made breakthrough progress. The Three-Body civilization were forced to break away from the home planet and marched towards Earth.

Sold On a Monday

Kristina McMorris

The sign is a last resort. It sits on a farmhouse porch in 1931, but could be found anywhere in an era of breadlines, bank runs and broken dreams. It could have been written by any mother facing impossible choices. For struggling reporter Ellis Reed, the gut-wrenching scene evokes memories of his family's dark past. He snaps a photograph of the children, not meant for publication. But when it leads to his big break, the consequences are more devastating than he ever imagined.

Little Fires Everywhere

Celeste Ng

In Shaker Heights, a placid, progressive suburb of Cleveland, everything is meticulously planned – from the layout of the winding roads, to the colours of the houses, to the successful lives its residents will go on to lead. Enter Mia Warren – an enigmatic artist and single mother who carries with her a mysterious past and a disregard for the rules that threaten to upend this community. *Little Fires Everywhere* explores the weight of long-held secrets and the ferocious pull of motherhood-and the danger of believing that planning and following the rules can avert disaster, or heartbreak.

Where The Crawdads Sing

Delia Owens

A coming-of-age crime drama about a girl growing up alone in the marshes of North Carolina. Kya is known in her town as the "Marsh Girl." She grows up in a shack out in the marshes bordering a small village on the coast of North Carolina. Her mother and her four older siblings all leave to get away from their abusive father, leaving her behind to fend for herself. Eventually, her father disappears as well.

The Overstory

Richard Powers

The Overstory, winner of the 2019 Pulitzer Prize in Fiction, is a sweeping, impassioned work of activism and resistance that is also a stunning evocation of the natural world.

From the roots to the crown and back to the seeds, Richard Powers's twelfth novel unfolds in concentric rings of interlocking fables that range from antebellum New York to the late twentieth-century Timber Wars of the Pacific Northwest and beyond. There is a world alongside ours—vast, slow, interconnected, resourceful, magnificently inventive, and almost invisible to us. This is the story of a handful of people who learn how to see that world and who are drawn up into its unfolding catastrophe.

Atlas Shrugged

Ayn Rand

Who is John Galt? When he says that he will stop the motor of the world, is he a destroyer or a liberator? Why does he have to fight his battles not against his enemies but against those who need him most? Why does he fight his hardest battle against the woman he loves?

A Tree Grows in Brooklyn

Betty Smith

From the moment she entered the world, Francie Nolan needed to be made of stern stuff, for growing up in the Williamsburg slums of Brooklyn, New York demanded fortitude, precocity, and strength of spirit. Often scorned by neighbors for her family's erratic and eccentric behavior—such as her father Johnny's taste for alcohol and Aunt Sissy's habit of marrying serially without the formality of divorce—no one, least of all Francie, could say that the Nolans' life lacked drama.

Mr. Penumbra's 24-Hour Bookstore: A Novel

Robin Sloan

The Great Recession has shuffled Clay Jannon away from life as a San Francisco web-design drone and into the aisles of Mr. Penumbra's 24-Hour Bookstore. But after a few days on the job, Clay discovers that the store is more curious than either its name or its gnomic owner might suggest. The customers are few, and they never seem to buy anything—instead, they "check out" large, obscure volumes from strange corners of the store.

Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead

Tom Stoppard

Acclaimed as a modern masterpiece, it is the fabulously inventive tale of *Hamlet* as told from the worm's-eye view of the bewildered Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, two minor characters in Shakespeare's play. This Shakespearean Laurel and Hardy finally get a chance to take the lead role, but do so in a world where reality and illusion intermix, and where fate leads our two heroes to a tragic but inevitable end.

A Gentleman in Moscow

Amor Towles

In 1922, Count Alexander Rostov is deemed an unrepentant aristocrat by a Bolshevik tribunal, and is sentenced to house arrest in the Metropol, a grand hotel across the street from the Kremlin. Rostov, an indomitable man of erudition and wit, has never worked a day in his life, and must now live in an attic room while some of the most tumultuous

decades in Russian history are unfolding outside the hotel's doors. Unexpectedly, his reduced circumstances provide him entry into a much larger world of emotional discovery.

The 7 ½ Deaths of Evelyn Hardcastle

Stuart Turton

Evelyn Hardcastle will die. Every day until Aiden Bishop can identify her killer and break the cycle. But every time the day begins again, Aiden wakes up in the body of a different guest. And some of his hosts are more helpful than others.

Mila 18: A Novel

Leon Uris

It was a time of crisis, a time of tragedy—and a time of transcendent courage and determination. Leon Uris's blazing novel is set in the midst of the ghetto uprising that defied Nazi tyranny, as the Jews of Warsaw boldly met Wehrmacht tanks with homemade weapons and bare fists. Here, painted on a canvas as broad as its subject matter, is the compelling of one of the most heroic struggles of modern times.

Among Others

Joe Walton

Raised by a half-mad mother who dabbled in magic, Morwenna Phelps found refuge in two worlds. As a child growing up in Wales, she and her twin sister played among the spirits who made their homes in industrial ruins, but her mind found freedom and promise in the science fiction novels that were her closest companions. When her mother tries to bend the spirits to dark ends with deadly results, Mori is sent away and must try to come to terms with what has happened without falling prey to the darkness.

The Martian

Andy Weir

Six days ago, astronaut Mark Watney became one of the first people to walk on Mars. Now, he's sure he'll be the first person to die there. After a dust storm nearly kills him and forces his crew to evacuate while thinking him dead, Mark finds himself stranded and completely alone with no way to even signal Earth that he's alive—and even if he could get word out, his supplies would be gone long before a rescue could arrive.

Nonfiction

They Can't Kill Us Until They Kill Us

Hanif Abdurraqib

In an age of confusion, fear, and loss, Hanif Abdurraqib's is a voice that matters. Whether he's attending a Bruce Springsteen concert the day after visiting Michael Brown's grave, or discussing public displays of affection at a Carly Rae Jepsen show, he writes with a poignancy and magnetism that resonates profoundly.

Fascism: A Warning

Madeleine Albright

A personal and urgent examination of Fascism in the twentieth century and how its legacy shapes today's world, written by one of America's most admired public servants, the first woman to serve as U.S. secretary of state. *Fascism: A Warning* is a book for our times that is relevant to all times. Written by someone who has not only studied history but helped to shape it, this call to arms teaches us the lessons we must understand and the questions we must answer if we are to save ourselves from repeating the tragic errors of the past.

Things That Make White People Uncomfortable

Michael Bennett

Michael Bennett is a Super Bowl Champion, a three-time Pro Bowl defensive end, a fearless activist, a feminist, a grassroots philanthropist, an organizer, and a change maker. He's also one of the most scathingly humorous athletes on the planet, and he wants to make you uncomfortable. Bennett adds his unmistakable voice to discussions of racism and police violence, Black athletes and their relationship to powerful institutions like the NCAA and the NFL, the role of protest in history, and the responsibilities of athletes as role models to speak out against injustice. Following in the footsteps of activist-athletes from Muhammad Ali to Colin Kaepernick, Bennett demonstrates his outspoken leadership both on and off the field.

Life in Motion: An Unlikely Ballerina

Misty Copeland

As the first African-American principal dancer at the American Ballet Theatre, Misty Copeland has been breaking down all kinds of barriers in the world of dance. Her road to excellence was not easy—a chaotic home life, with several siblings and a single mother, was a stark contrast to the control and comfort she found on stage. And when her home life and incredible dance promise begin to clash, Misty had to learn to stand up for herself and navigate a complex relationship with her mother, while pursuing her ballet dreams.

Barbarian Days: A Surfing Life

William Finnegan

Barbarian Days is William Finnegan's memoir of an obsession, a complex enchantment. Raised in California and Hawaii, Finnegan started surfing as a child. He has chased waves all over the world, wandering for years through the South Pacific, Australia, Asia, Africa. A bookish boy, and then an excessively adventurous young man, he went on to become a distinguished writer and war reporter. *Barbarian Days* is an old-school adventure story, an intellectual autobiography, a social history, a literary road movie, and an extraordinary exploration of the gradual mastering of an exacting, little-understood art.

Swimming to Antarctica: Tales of a Long-Distance Swimmer

Lynne Fox

Here is the joyful, inspirational memoir of swimmer Lynne Cox. By age sixteen, she had broken all records for English Channel swims, became the first to swim the Strait of Magellan, narrowly escaped a shark attack off the Cape of Good Hope, and was cheered across the twenty-mile Cook Strait of New Zealand by dolphins. She has swum in the

thirty-eight-degree waters of the Bering Strait and a mile in the iceberg-choked waters of the Antarctic. With a poet's eye for detail, Cox shares the beauty of her time in the water in this new classic of sports memoir.

The Moment of Lift: How Empowering Women Changes the World

Melinda Gates

A debut from Melinda Gates, a timely and necessary call to action for women's empowerment. Writing with emotion, candor, and grace, she introduces us to remarkable women and shows the power of connecting with one another. "How can we summon a moment of lift for human beings – and especially for women? Because when you lift up women, you lift up humanity."

The Short and Tragic Life of Robert Peace

Jeff Hobbs

An instant New York Times bestseller, named a best book of the year by The New York Times Book Review, Amazon, and Entertainment Weekly, among others, this celebrated account of a young African-American man who escaped Newark, NJ, to attend Yale, but still faced the dangers of the streets when he returned is, "nuanced and shattering" (People) and "mesmeric" (The New York Times Book Review).

But What If We're Wrong?: Thinking About the Present As If It Were the Past

Chuck Klosterman

But What If We're Wrong? is a book of original, reported, interconnected pieces, which speculate on the likelihood that many universally accepted, deeply ingrained cultural and scientific beliefs will someday seem absurd. Covering a spectrum of objective and subjective topics, the book attempts to visualize present-day society the way it will be viewed in a distant future.

The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History

Elizabeth Kolbert

Scientists around the world are currently monitoring the sixth extinction, predicted to be the most devastating extinction event since the asteroid impact that wiped out the dinosaurs. This time around, the cataclysm is us. In *The Sixth Extinction*, two-time winner of the National Magazine Award and *New Yorker* writer Elizabeth Kolbert draws on the work of scores of researchers in half a dozen disciplines, accompanying many of them into the field: geologists who study deep ocean cores, botanists who follow the tree line as it climbs up the Andes, marine biologists who dive off the Great Barrier Reef. The sixth extinction is likely to be mankind's most lasting legacy; as Kolbert observes, it compels us to rethink the fundamental question of what it means to be human.

Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mt. Everest Disaster

Jon Krakauer

A bank of clouds was assembling on the not-so-distant horizon, but journalist-mountaineer Jon Krakauer, standing on the summit of Mt. Everest, saw nothing that "suggested that a murderous storm was bearing down." He was wrong. The storm, which claimed five lives and left countless more--including Krakauer's--in guilt-ridden disarray,

would also provide the impetus for *Into Thin Air*, Krakauer's epic account of the May 1996 disaster.

Belonging: A German Reckons with History and Home

Nora Krug

Nora Krug was born decades after the fall of the Nazi regime, but the Second World War cast a long shadow throughout her childhood and youth in the city of Karlsruhe, Germany. For Nora, the simple fact of her German citizenship bound her to the Holocaust and its unspeakable atrocities and left her without a sense of cultural belonging. In her late thirties, after twelve years in the US, Krug realizes that living abroad has only intensified her need to ask the questions she didn't dare to as a child and young adult. Returning to Germany, she visits archives, conducts research, and interviews family members, uncovering in the process the stories of her maternal grandfather. Her quest, spanning continents and generations, pieces together her family's troubling story and reflects on what it means to be a German of her generation.

Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything

Steven D. Levitt

Freakonomics is a groundbreaking collaboration between Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner, an award-winning author and journalist. They set out to explore the inner workings of a crack gang, the truth about real estate agents, the secrets of the Ku Klux Klan, and much more. Through forceful storytelling and wry insight, they show that economics is, at root, the study of incentives—how people get what they want or need, especially when other people want or need the same thing.

Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood

Trevor Noah

Born a Crime is the story of a mischievous young boy who grows into a restless young man as he struggles to find himself in a world where he was never supposed to exist. It is also the story of that young man's relationship with his fearless, rebellious, and fervently religious mother—his teammate, a woman determined to save her son from the cycle of poverty, violence, and abuse that would ultimately threaten her own life.

Becoming

Michelle Obama

An intimate, powerful, and inspiring memoir. #1 New York Times Bestseller, Oprah's Book Club Pick, and NAACP Image Award Winner. Michelle Obama invites readers into her world, chronicling the experiences that have shaped her—from her childhood on the South Side of Chicago to her years as an executive balancing the demands of motherhood and work, to her time spent at the world's most famous address.

Girls and Sex: Navigating the Complicated New Landscape

Peggy Orenstein

A generation gap has emerged between parents and their girls. Even in this age of helicopter parenting, the mothers and fathers of tomorrow's women have little idea what their daughters are up to sexually or how they feel about it. Drawing on in-depth

interviews with over seventy young women and a wide range of psychologists, academics, and experts, renowned journalist Peggy Orenstein goes where most others fear to tread, pulling back the curtain on the hidden truths, hard lessons, and important possibilities of girls' sex lives in the modern world.

The Last Pass

Gary M. Pomerantz

At the heart of the story *The Last Pass* tells is the relationship between the two iconic athletes Bob Cousy, the Hall of Fame Boston Celtics captain who led the team to its first six championships on an unparalleled run, and his partner Bill Russell. *The Last Pass* situates the Celtics dynasty against the full dramatic canvas of American life in the 50s and 60s. It is an enthralling portrait of the heart of this legendary team that throws open a window onto the wider world at a time of wrenching social change.

Everything I want to Do Is Illegal: War Stories from the Local Food Front

Joel Salatin

Drawing upon 40 years' experience as an ecological farmer and marketer, Joel Salatin explains with humor and passion why Americans do not have the freedom to choose the food they purchase and eat. The bureaucratic system favors industrial, global corporate food systems and discourages community-based food commerce, resulting in homogenized selection, mediocre quality, and exposure to non-organic farming practices. Salatin's expert insight explains why local food is expensive and difficult to find and will illuminate for the reader a deeper understanding of the industrial food complex.

The Code Book: The Science of Secrecy from Ancient Egypt to Quantum Cryptography

Simon Singh

From Mary, Queen of Scots, trapped by her own code, to the Navajo Code Talkers who helped the Allies win World War II, to the incredible (and incredibly simple) logistical breakthrough that made Internet commerce secure, *The Code Book* tells the story of the most powerful intellectual weapon ever known: secrecy. Throughout the text are clear technical and mathematical explanations, and portraits of the remarkable personalities who wrote and broke the world's most difficult codes. Accessible, compelling, and remarkably far-reaching, this book will forever alter your view of history and what drives it.

Infinite Powers: How Calculus Reveals the Secrets of the Universe

Steven Strogatz

Infinite Powers recounts how calculus tantalized and thrilled its inventors, starting with its first glimmers in ancient Greece and bringing us right up to the discovery of gravitational waves (a phenomenon predicted by calculus). Though many of us were scared away from this essential, engrossing subject in high school and college, Steven Strogatz's brilliantly creative, down-to-earth history shows that calculus is not about complexity; it's about simplicity. It harnesses an unreal number—infinity—to tackle real-world problems, breaking them down into easier ones and then reassembling the answers into solutions that feel miraculous.

First They Killed My Father: A Daughter of Cambodia Remembers (P.S.)

Loung Ung

One of seven children of a high-ranking government official, Loung Ung lived a privileged life in the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh until the age of five. Then, in April 1975, Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge army stormed into the city, forcing Ung's family to flee and, eventually, to disperse. Loung was trained as a child soldier in a work camp for orphans, her siblings were sent to labor camps, and those who survived the horrors would not be reunited until the Khmer Rouge was destroyed. Harrowing yet hopeful, Loung's powerful story is an unforgettable account of a family shaken and shattered, yet miraculously sustained by courage and love in the face of unspeakable brutality.

Are We Smart Enough to Know How Smart Animals Are?

Frans de Waal

Did you know that octopuses use coconut shells as tools, that elephants classify humans by gender and language, and that there is a young male chimpanzee at Kyoto University whose flash memory puts that of humans to shame? Fascinating, entertaining, and deeply informed, de Waal's landmark work will convince you to rethink everything you thought you knew about animal—and human—intelligence.

The Girl Who Smiled Beads: A Story of War and What Comes After

Clemantine Wamariya

Clemantine Wamariya was six years old when her mother and father began to speak in whispers, when neighbors began to disappear, and when she heard the loud, ugly sounds her brother said were thunder. It was 1994, and in 100 days more than 800,000 people would be murdered in Rwanda and millions more displaced. Clemantine and her fifteen-year-old sister, Claire, ran and spent the next six years wandering through seven African countries searching for safety. They did not know whether their parents were alive. At age twelve, Clemantine and Claire were granted asylum in the United States. Raw, urgent, yet disarmingly beautiful, this book captures the true costs and aftershocks of war: what is forever lost, what can be repaired, the fragility and importance of memory. A riveting story of dislocation, survival.