

Middletown Township Public Schools

High School North and South English Departments

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Parents and Sophomore Students, Class of 2012:

All **sophomore** students entering High School North or High School South in September 2009 are required to read **two novels** this summer. Read and follow the directions below:

10 Honors' students must read: *Manhunt* by James L. Swanson
All other grade 10 levels must read: *When the Legends Die* by Hal Borland

For the above stated novels, all students **must submit** a completed **reader response journal** to their English teacher **on or before the first Monday of school**. The student is to:

- Choose ten (10) quotations from the text and respond to each, explaining their significance in the overall context of the novel and/or give a personal response to the quote.
- Quotes must be spread out over the entirety of the book (i.e., the quotes cannot come from the first few chapters).
- Students may use the attached reader-response form or type their responses in the same format.

In addition, all sophomore students **must choose and read one book*** from the following list. English teachers will assess the second book in September.

Gods and Generals by Jeff Shaara
Slam! by Walter Dean Myers
The Devil in the White City by Erik Larson
A Break with Charity by Ann Rinaldi

Wicked by Gregory Maguire
Little Women by Louisa May Alcott
The Lovely Bones by Alice Sebold
The Adventures of Tom Sawyer by Mark Twain

Books may be borrowed from the Middletown Public Library. The books may, also, be purchased at Barnes and Noble (in Holmdel or Eatontown) or at Borders (in Eatontown). All locations have received requests from us to have the books in stock.

Please address any questions to the Assistant Principals of Curriculum indicated below.

Sincerely yours,

Carol Buckley, Assistant Principal
High School North

Marie D. Caldaro, Assistant Principal
High School South

*See attached page for book descriptions.

CC: Karen Bilbao
Fred Carrigg

Manhunt by James L. Swanson

Has any other month in American history been as tumultuous as April 1865? In a matter of weeks, Richmond fell; the Confederacy collapsed and surrendered; President Abraham Lincoln was shot and killed; and, for 12 days, Lincoln's assassin, famed actor John Wilkes Booth, outraced and outsmarted his would-be captors before he was cornered in a barn and shot dead. In *Manhunt*, James L. Swanson retraces the search for a celebrity who succeeded in changing our history.

When the Legends Die by Hal Borland

When his father killed another brave, Thomas Black Bull and his parents sought refuge in the wilderness. There they took up life as it had been in the old days, hunting and fishing, battling for survival. But an accident claimed the father's life and the grieving mother died shortly afterward. Left alone, the young Indian boy vowed never to return to the white man's world, to the alien laws that had condemned his father.

A Break with Charity: A Story About the Salem Witch Trials by Ann Rinaldi

A fictionalized account of the Salem witch trials as told via the story of a young woman named Susanna English. Although Susanna has been told by one of the girls "crying out" that they are deliberately making up accusations, Susanna dares not speak up for fear that she and her family will also be accused of witchcraft. Will Susanna be able to stand by in silence as she sees other members of her community falsely accused?

Slam! by Walter Dean Myers

Sixteen-year-old Greg "Slam" Harris can do it all on the basketball court. His grades aren't so hot, though. And when his teachers jam his troubles in his face, Slam blows up. He never doubted himself on the court until he found himself going one on one with his future.

Little Women by Louisa May Alcott

Without a doubt, *Little Women* remains Louisa May Alcott's best-known work. Its charm and innocence continue to engage readers, despite the fact that the social and familial reality depicted is very different from contemporary domestic life. Jo March is regarded as one of the most complete, self-possessed, and best-loved characters in children's literature. In fact, many boys find that they can relate to her almost as easily as girls can. While some present-day readers find Jo and her sisters too good to be realistic, according to the standards of Alcott's society, the March girls are flawed and vulnerable. The author dared to give her characters faults such as selfishness, vanity, temper, and bashfulness—qualities never seen before in such young characters.

Tom Sawyer by Mark Twain

Mark Twain's publication in 1876 of his popular novel *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* reversed a brief downturn in his success following the publication of his previous novel, *The Gilded Age*. Twain wrote *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* while he and his family were living in Hartford, Connecticut, and while Twain was enjoying his fame. The novel, which tells of the escapades of a young boy and his friends in St. Petersburg, Missouri, a village near the Mississippi River, recalls Twain's own childhood in a small Missouri town. The friendship of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn is one of the most celebrated in American literature, built on imaginative adventures, shared superstitions, and loyalty that rises above social convention. Twain's American reading audience loved this novel and its young hero, and the novel remains one of the most popular and famous works of American literature. The novel and its characters have achieved folk hero status in the American popular imagination.

The Lovely Bones by Alice Sebold

Shockingly original and completely unforgettable, *The Lovely Bones* is the story of a family devastated by a gruesome murder -- a murder recounted by the teenage victim. Upsetting, you say? Remarkably, first-time novelist Alice Sebold takes this difficult material and delivers a compelling and accomplished exploration of a fractured family's need for peace and closure. The details of the crime are laid out in the first few pages: from her vantage point in heaven, Susie Salmon describes how she was confronted by the murderer one December afternoon on her way home from school. Lured into an underground hiding place, she was raped and killed. But what the reader knows, her family does not. Anxiously, we keep vigil with Susie, aching for her grieving family, desperate for the killer to be found and punished. Sebold creates a heaven that's calm and comforting, a place whose residents can have whatever they enjoyed when they were alive -- and then some. But Susie isn't ready to release her hold on life just yet, and she intensely watches her family and friends as they struggle to cope with a reality in which she is no longer a part. To her great credit, Sebold has shaped one of the most loving and sympathetic fathers in contemporary literature.

The Devil in The White City by Erik Larson

Two men, each handsome and unusually adept at his chosen work, embodied an element of the great dynamic that characterized America's rush toward the twentieth century. The architect was Daniel Hudson Burnham, the fair's brilliant director of works and the builder of many of the country's most important structures, including the Flatiron Building in New York and Union Station in Washington, D.C. The murderer was Henry H. Holmes, a young doctor who, in a malign parody of the White City, built his "World's Fair Hotel" just west of the fairgrounds—a torture palace complete with dissection table, gas chamber, and 3,000-degree crematorium. Burnham overcame tremendous obstacles and tragedies as he organized the talents of Frederick Law Olmsted, Charles McKim, Louis Sullivan, and others to transform swampy Jackson Park into the White City, while Holmes used the attraction of the great fair and his own satanic charms to lure scores of young women to their deaths. What makes the story all the more chilling is that Holmes really lived, walking the grounds of that dream city by the lake. *The Devil in the White City* draws the listener into a time of magic and majesty, made all the more appealing by a supporting cast of real-life characters, including Buffalo Bill, Theodore Dreiser, Susan B. Anthony, Thomas Edison, Archduke Francis Ferdinand, and others.

Gods and Generals by Jeff Shaara

The story of *Gods and Generals* begins with Michael Shaara, author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning classic *The Killer Angels*. A native of New Jersey, Michael Shaara grew to be an adventurous young man: over the years, he found work as a sailor, a paratrooper, a policeman, and an English professor at Florida State University. In 1952, his son Jeff was born in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Michael's interest in Gettysburg was prompted by some letters written by his great-grandfather, who had been wounded at the great battle while serving with the 4th Georgia Infantry. In 1966, he took his family on a vacation to the battlefield and found himself moved. In 1970, Michael Shaara returned to Gettysburg with his son Jeff. The pair crisscrossed the historic site, gathering detailed information for the father's novel-in-progress. In 1974, the novel was published with the title *The Killer Angels*. This gripping fictional account of the three bloody days at Gettysburg won Michael Shaara a Pulitzer Prize and a vast, appreciative audience. To date it has sold two million copies. When Michael Shaara died in 1988, his son Jeff began to manage his literary estate. It was a legacy he knew well, having helped his father create it. When director Ron Maxwell filmed the movie *Gettysburg*, based on *The Killer*

Angels, he asked Jeff to serve as a consultant. Maxwell encouraged Shaara to continue the story his father began; inspired, Jeff planned an ambitious trilogy, with *The Killer Angels* as the centerpiece, following the war from its origins to its end. With *Gods and Generals*, Jeff Shaara gives fans of *The Killer Angels* everything they could have asked--an epic, brilliantly written saga that brings the nation's greatest conflict to life.

Wicked by Gregory Maguire

Elphaba's With a husky voice and a gentle, dramatic manner that will call to mind the image of a patient grandfather reading to an excited gaggle of children, McDonough leisurely narrates this fantastical tale of good and evil, of choice and responsibility. In Maguire's Oz, Elphaba, better known as the Wicked Witch of the West, is not wicked; nor is she a formally schooled witch. Instead, she's an insecure, unfortunately green Munchkinlander who's willing to take radical steps to unseat the tyrannical Wizard of Oz. Using an appropriately brusque voice for the always blunt Elphaba, McDonough relates her tumultuous childhood (spent with an alcoholic mother and a minister father) and eye-opening school years (when she befriends her roommate, Glinda

Reader Response Journal

Page #	Quote	Significance/Reaction
Quote 1		
Quote 2		
Quote 3		

Quote 4		
Quote 5		
Quote 6		
Quote 7		

Quote 8		
Quote 9		
Quote 10		