

MIDDLETOWN TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of the Assistant Superintendent

P. O. Box 4170
Middletown, NJ 07748
(732)-291-3850
Fax (732)-291- 2364

William O. George III, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Jill A. Takacs, Ed.D
Assistant Superintendent for
Curriculum & Instruction

Charlene O'Hagan
District Director of Curriculum, Humanities

Tyniesha Douglas
Assistant Principal, High School English

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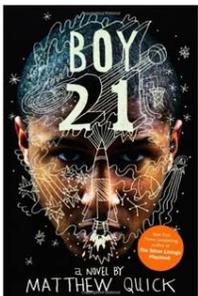
Parents and Freshman Students, Class of 2020:

We are pleased to continue with the district summer reading expectations for students entering grades nine through twelve which was introduced two years ago. This year, the list of recommended reading selections was greatly expanded to account for a broader range of student choices that are representative of multiple genres and cover topics of current interest to high school students. Additionally, the related summer reading assignments were restructured. Students will be expected to present a “book talk” to a group of their peers some time during the first several weeks of the school year. Upon their return, all students will complete an in-class timed writing assignment based on the book that they did not select for their book talk. While all students must read at least two books, we are hopeful that the expanded lists will encourage students to read more and look forward to the *luxury of time* that summer will provide and allow them to experience the joy of reading books they will love.

Current research on summer reading largely exposes the extent to which a several month gap in literacy activities can hinder reading growth. Our efforts in this revision process were focused upon seeking out titles and activities that are motivating to current high school students and offer them a greater incentive to pick up a few good books to help pass the summer months. The intention of the summer reading expectation is to foster continued application of the valuable reading strategies and skills that students have learned during the school year. We invite students to fall in love with marvelous characters, open the door to new worlds, and embark on wild adventures.

We encourage parents and guardians of students entering 9th grade to be actively involved in the book selection process to approve the genre, topic and age-level appropriateness of selected books. Please take some time to review the grade level recommendations together with your child in an effort to support reading choices that best meet his/her interests and reading ability. We have collaborated with both the Middletown Township Public Library and the Holmdel location of Barnes & Noble to ensure that ample copies of titles on the recommended reading lists are available.

Students entering 9th Grade may select from the following list of books:

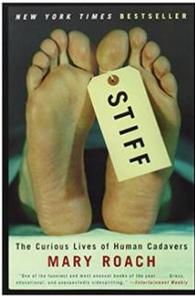


***Boy 21* by Matthew Quick**

Genre: Fiction

You can lose yourself in repetition--quiet your thoughts; I learned the value of this at a very young age.

Basketball has always been an escape for Finley. He lives in broken-down Bellmont, a town ruled by the Irish mob, drugs, violence, and racially charged rivalries. At home, his dad works nights, and Finley is left to take care of his disabled grandfather alone. He's always dreamed of getting out someday, but until he can, putting on that number 21 jersey makes everything seem okay. Russ has just moved to the neighborhood, and the life of this teen basketball phenom has been turned upside down by tragedy. Cut off from everyone he knows, he won't pick up a basketball, but answers only to the name Boy21--taken from his former jersey number. As their final year of high school brings these two boys together, a unique friendship may turn out to be the answer they both need.

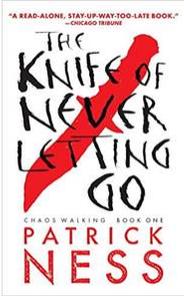


***Stiff* by Mary Roach**

Genre: Non-Fiction

"One of the funniest and most unusual books of the year....Gross, educational, and unexpectedly sidesplitting."—*Entertainment Weekly*

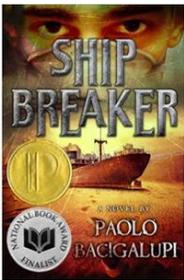
Stiff is an oddly compelling, often hilarious exploration of the strange lives of our bodies postmortem. For two thousand years, cadavers—some willingly, some unwittingly—have been involved in science's boldest strides and weirdest undertakings. In this fascinating account, Mary Roach visits the good deeds of cadavers over the centuries and tells the engrossing story of our bodies when we are no longer with them.



***The Knife of Never Letting Go* by Patrick Ness**

Genre: Science Fiction

Todd Hewitt is the only boy in a town of men. Ever since the settlers were infected with the Noise germ, Todd can hear everything the men think, and they hear everything he thinks. Todd is just a month away from becoming a man, but in the midst of the cacophony, he knows that the town is hiding something from him -- something so awful Todd is forced to flee with only his dog, whose simple, loyal voice he hears too. With hostile men from the town in pursuit, the two stumble upon a strange and eerily silent creature: a girl. Who is she? Why wasn't she killed by the germ like all the females on New World? Propelled by Todd's gritty narration, readers are in for a white-knuckle journey in which a boy on the cusp of manhood must unlearn everything he knows in order to figure out who he truly is.

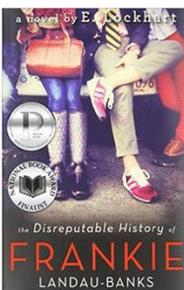


***Ship Breaker* by Paolo Bacigalupi**

Genre: Young Adult Fiction

A gritty, high-stakes adventure set in a futuristic world where oil is scarce, but loyalty is scarcer.

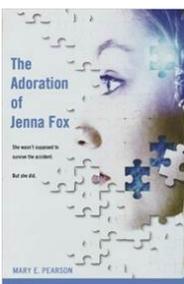
In America's Gulf Coast region, grounded oil tankers are being broken down for parts by crews of young people. Nailer, a teenage boy, works the light crew, scavenging for copper wiring just to make quota-and hopefully live to see another day. But when, by luck or by chance, he discovers an exquisite clipper ship beached during a recent hurricane, Nailer faces the most important decision of his life: Strip the ship for all it's worth or rescue its lone survivor, a beautiful and wealthy girl who could lead him to a better life. In this powerful novel, Paolo Bacigalupi delivers a thrilling, fast-paced adventure set in a vivid and raw, uncertain future.



***The Disreputable History of Frankie Landau Banks* by E. Lockhart**

Genre: Young Adult Fiction

Over the course of one summer, Frankie Landau-Banks, a somewhat geeky girl with an unassuming nature, has developed into a 15-year-old with an attention-grabbing figure, a new attitude, and sights set on making changes at her elite boarding school in this novel. The teenager also has a new boyfriend, a gorgeous senior who belongs to a long-standing secret society on campus—The Loyal Order of the Basset Hounds, known mostly for silly pranks and a history of male-only membership. With a witty, sharp, and intelligently scheming mind, Frankie manipulates the Loyal Order to do her bidding with pranks meant to make a political statement about the male-dominated and classist nature of the school. Readers will feel that they are a part of the teen's disreputable and humorous history.



***The Adoration of Jenna Fox* by Mary E. Pearson**

Genre: Science Fiction

Who is Jenna Fox? Seventeen-year-old Jenna has been told that is her name. She has just awoken from a coma, they tell her, and she is still recovering from a terrible accident in which she was involved a year ago. But what happened before that? Jenna doesn't remember her life. Or does she? And are the memories really hers? This fascinating novel represents a stunning new direction for acclaimed author Mary Pearson. Set in a near future America, it takes readers on an unforgettable journey through questions of bio-medical ethics and the nature of humanity. Mary Pearson's vividly drawn characters and masterful writing soar to a new level of sophistication. *The Adoration of Jenna Fox* is a 2009 Bank Street - Best Children's Book of the Year.



***Nothing* by Martin Aitken**

Genre: Contemporary Young Adult Fiction

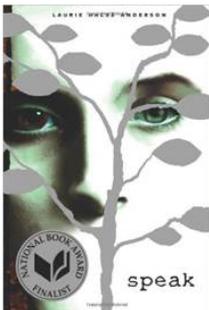
This modern-day *Lord of the Flies* is a haunting existential novel, both award-winning and and provocative. Now in paperback as part of the Atheneum Collection!

“Nothing matters.”

“From the moment you are born, you start to die.”

“The Earth is 4.6 billion years old. You’ll live to be a maximum of one hundred. Life isn’t worth the bother!”

So says Pierre Anthon when he decides there is no meaning to life, leaves his seventh-grade classroom, climbs a plum tree, and stays there. His friends and classmates cannot get him to come down, not even by pelting him with rocks. So to prove to him that there is a meaning to life, they set out to give up things of importance, challenging one another to make increasingly serious sacrifices. The pile is started with a lifetime’s collection of Dungeons & Dragons books, a fishing rod, a pair of green sandals, a pet hamster—but then, as each demand becomes more extreme, events take a morbid twist. And what if, after all these sacrifices, the pile is still not meaningful enough to bring Pierre Anthon down?



***Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson**

Genre: Fiction

The first ten lies they tell you in high school.

"Speak up for yourself--we want to know what you have to say." From the first moment of her freshman year at Merryweather High, Melinda knows this is a big fat lie, part of the nonsense of high school. She is friendless, outcast, because she busted an end-of-summer party by calling the cops, so now nobody will talk to her, let alone listen to her. As time passes, she becomes increasingly isolated and practically stops talking altogether. Only her art class offers any solace, and it is through her work on an art project that she is finally able to face what really happened at that terrible party: she was raped by an upperclassman, a guy who still attends Merryweather and is still a threat to her. Her healing process has just begun when she has another violent encounter with him. But this time Melinda fights back, refuses to be silent, and thereby achieves a measure of vindication. In Laurie Halse Anderson's powerful novel, an utterly believable heroine with a bitterly ironic voice delivers a blow to the hypocritical world of high school. She speaks for many a disenfranchised teenager while demonstrating the importance of speaking up for oneself. *Speak* was a 1999 National Book Award Finalist for Young People's Literature.



***Orbiting Jupiter* by Gary D. Schmidt**

Genre: Realistic Fiction

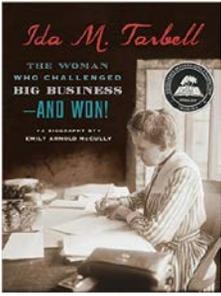
“The two-time Newbery Honor winner Gary D. Schmidt delivers the shattering story of Joseph, a father at thirteen, who has never seen his daughter, Jupiter. After spending time in a juvenile facility, he’s placed with a foster family on a farm in rural Maine. Here Joseph, damaged and withdrawn, meets twelve-year-old Jack, who narrates the account of the troubled, passionate teen who wants to find his baby at any cost. In this riveting novel, two boys discover the true meaning of family and the sacrifices it requires. “-Amazon



***Eyes Wide Open: Going Behind the Environmental Headlines* by Paul Fleischman**

Genre: Nonfiction

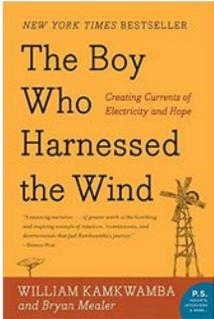
“ Paul Fleischman offers teens an environmental wake-up call and a tool kit for decoding the barrage of conflicting information confronting them. We’re living in an Ah-Ha moment. Take 250 years of human ingenuity. Add abundant fossil fuels. The result: a population and lifestyle never before seen. The downsides weren’t visible for centuries, but now they are. Suddenly everything needs rethinking – suburbs, cars, fast food, cheap prices. It’s a changed world. This book explains it. Not with isolated facts, but the principles driving attitudes and events, from vested interests to denial to big-country syndrome. Because money is as important as molecules in the environment, science is joined with politics, history, and psychology to provide the briefing needed to comprehend the 21st century. “ –Amazon



***Ida Tarbell: The Woman Who Challenged Big Business—and Won!* By Emily A. McCully**

Genre: Biography

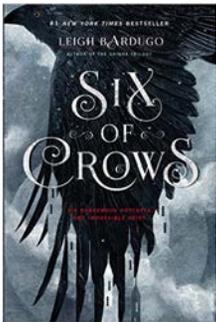
“Born in 1857 and raised in oil country, Ida M. Tarbell was one of the first investigative journalists and probably the most influential in her time. Her series of articles on the Standard Oil Trust, a complicated business empire run by John D. Rockefeller, revealed to readers the underhanded, even illegal practices that had led to Rockefeller's success. Rejecting the term "muckraker" to describe her profession, she went on to achieve remarkable prominence for a woman of her generation as a writer and shaper of public opinion. This biography offers an engrossing portrait of a trailblazer in a man's world who left her mark on the American consciousness.” -Amazon



***The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* by William Kamkwamba**

Genre: Nonfiction

“William Kamkwamba was born in Malawi, a country where magic ruled and modern science was mystery. It was also a land withered by drought and hunger. But William had read about windmills, and he dreamed of building one that would bring to his small village a set of luxuries that only 2 percent of Malawians could enjoy: electricity and running water. His neighbors called him misala—crazy—but William refused to let go of his dreams. With a small pile of once-forgotten science textbooks; some scrap metal, tractor parts, and bicycle halves; and an armory of curiosity and determination, he embarked on a daring plan to forge an unlikely contraption and small miracle that would change the lives around him. *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* is a remarkable true story about human inventiveness and its power to overcome crippling adversity. It will inspire anyone who doubts the power of one individual's ability to change his community and better the lives of those around him.” -Amazon



***Six of Crows* by Leigh Bardugo**

Genre: Fantasy

“Ketterdam: a bustling hub of international trade where anything can be had for the right price--and no one knows that better than criminal prodigy Kaz Brekker. Kaz is offered a chance at a deadly heist that could make him rich beyond his wildest dreams. But he can't pull it off alone...A convict with a thirst for revenge. A sharpshooter who can't walk away from a wager. A runaway with a privileged past. A spy known as the Wraith. A Heartreender using her magic to survive the slums. A thief with a gift for unlikely escapes. Six dangerous outcasts. One impossible heist. Kaz's crew is the only thing that might stand between the world and destruction—if they don't kill each other first.”-Amazon

Books may be borrowed from the Middletown Public Library or purchased at Barnes and Noble in Holmdel.

SUMMER SUMMER SUMMER

Summer Reading Assignment for Students Entering Grades 9-12

- Students will be required to read a minimum of 2 books from the above list, however, more are encouraged.
- Students will conduct a book talk on one of the books they have read when they return to school in September.
- **Students are required to provide a written list of the books they read including the name of each author.**
- When they return to school in September the student and teacher will collaborate to decide which book they will use for their book talk.
- Students may want to review some web-based examples of book talks. The website below is one source that may be useful:
<http://nancykeane.com/booktalks/student.htm>
- Students will be required to complete an in-class timed writing on the book they did not select for their book talk.

Students should follow the guidelines listed below as they prepare for their book talks.

Giving a Good Book Talk:

- Plan to speak for about 3-5 minutes
- Briefly summarize the plot of the book and identify the genre, but **do not** give away the ending. Think about what you would and would not have wanted to know before reading.
- Prepare what you are going to say about the book. You don't need to memorize, but you need to know the points you are going to make. Practice until you are comfortable with your material.
- Optional topics to focus on:
 - The theme of the book
 - The major conflict
 - A brief description of the main characters and their relationships
 - Setting and how it relates to the plot and characters
 - Mention if the book reminds you of another book you have read or a movie you have seen
 - Identify what you think the author would have wanted readers to take from the experience of reading the book
 - Tell the audience if you recommend the book and why or why not. Remember, even if the book was not one of your favorites, does not mean that someone else may not enjoy reading the book.
 - If you come across a significant or powerful passage, you may read it aloud. This should be short and leave the listener wanting more.