

Summer Reading List – Incoming 10th Graders (Class of 2026)

Theme: The Power of Teamwork Bishop Hendricken High School

Directions: All students are expected to read during the summer in preparation for their English class. All CP and CP1 students are to read one book from the list of 6 choices below, and all honors students are to read two books from the list. Students can expect a summer reading test during the first week of classes.

If you have any questions, please reach out to Mrs. Melissa Sousa, English department chairperson, at MSousa@Hendricken.com.

1) Shadow and Bone: Book 1 by Leigh Bardugo (Fiction)

“Soldier. Summoner. Saint. Orphaned and expendable, Alina Starkov is a soldier who knows she may not survive her first trek across the Shadow Fold—a swath of unnatural darkness crawling with monsters. But when her regiment is attacked, Alina unleashes dormant magic not even she knew she possessed. Now Alina will enter a lavish world of royalty and intrigue as she trains with the Grisha, her country’s magical military elite—and falls under the spell of their notorious leader, the Darkling. He believes Alina can summon a force capable of destroying the Shadow Fold and reuniting their war-ravaged country, but only if she can master her untamed gift. As the threat to the kingdom mounts and Alina unlocks the secrets of her past, she will make a dangerous discovery that could threaten all she loves and the very future of a nation. Welcome to Ravka . . . a world of science and superstition where nothing is what it seems.”

2) Salt to the Sea by Ruta Sepetys (Fiction)

“In 1945, World War II is drawing to a close in East Prussia and thousands of refugees are on a desperate trek toward freedom, almost all of them with something to hide. Among them are Joana, Emilia, and Florian, whose paths converge en route to the ship that promises salvation, the Wilhelm Gustloff. Forced by circumstance to unite, the three find their strength, courage, and trust in each other tested with each step closer toward safety. Just when it seems freedom is within their grasp, tragedy strikes. Not country, nor culture, nor status matter as all ten thousand people aboard must fight for the same thing: survival. A tribute to the people of Lithuania, Poland, and East Prussia, Ruta Sepetys unearths a shockingly little-known casualty of a gruesome war, and proves that humanity can prevail, even in the darkest of hours.”

3) A Long Way Gone by Ishmael Beah (Nonfiction)

“A gripping story of a child’s journey through hell and back. There may be as many as 300,000 child soldiers, hopped-up on drugs and wielding AK-47s, in more than fifty conflicts around the world. Ishmael Beah used to be one of them. He is one of the first to tell his story in his own words. In A LONG WAY GONE, Beah, now twenty-six years old, tells a riveting story. At the age of twelve, he fled attacking rebels and wandered a land rendered unrecognizable by violence. By thirteen, he’d been picked up by the government army, and Beah, at heart a gentle boy, found that he was capable of truly terrible acts. Eventually released by the army and sent to a UNICEF rehabilitation center, he struggled to regain his humanity and to reenter the world of civilians, who viewed him with fear and suspicion. This is, at last, a story of redemption and hope.”

4) The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck (Fiction)

“First published in 1939, Steinbeck’s Pulitzer Prize-winning epic of the Great Depression chronicles the Dust Bowl migration of the 1930s and tells the story of one Oklahoma farm family, the Joads—driven from

their homestead and forced to travel west to the promised land of California. Out of their trials and their repeated collisions against the hard realities of an America divided into Haves and Have-Nots evolves a drama that is intensely human yet majestic in its scale and moral vision, elemental yet plainspoken, tragic but ultimately stirring in its human dignity. A portrait of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless, of one man's fierce reaction to injustice, and of one woman's stoical strength, the novel captures the horrors of the Great Depression and probes into the very nature of equality and justice in America. At once a naturalistic epic, captivity narrative, road novel, and transcendental gospel, Steinbeck's powerful landmark novel is perhaps the most American of American Classics."

5) Mind and Matter by John Urschel (Nonfiction)

"For John Urschel, what began as an insatiable appetite for puzzles as a child developed into mastery of the elegant systems and rules of mathematics. By the time he was thirteen, Urschel was auditing a college-level calculus course. But when he joined his high school football team, a new interest began to eclipse the thrill he felt in the classroom. Football challenged Urschel in an entirely different way, and he became addicted to the physical contact of the sport. After he accepted a scholarship to play at Penn State, his love of math was rekindled. As a Nittany Lion, he refused to sacrifice one passion for the other. Against the odds, Urschel found a way to manage his double life as a scholar and an athlete. While he was an offensive lineman for the Baltimore Ravens, he simultaneously pursued his PhD in mathematics at MIT. Weaving together two separate narratives, Urschel relives for us the most pivotal moments of his bifurcated life. He explains why, after Penn State was sanctioned for the acts of former coach Jerry Sandusky, he declined offers from prestigious universities and refused to abandon his team. He describes his parents' different influences and their profound effect on him, and he opens up about the correlation between football and CTE and the risks he took for the game he loves. Equally at home discussing Georg Cantor's work on infinities and Bill Belichick's playbook, Urschel reveals how each challenge—whether on the field or in the classroom—has brought him closer to understanding the two different halves of his own life, and how reason and emotion, the mind and the body, are always working together. "So often, people want to divide the world into two," he observes. "Matter and energy. Wave and particle. Athlete and mathematician. Why can't something (or someone) be both?"

6) Boys in the Boat by Daniel James Brown (Nonfiction)

"Out of the depths of the Depression comes an irresistible story about beating the odds and finding hope in the most desperate of times—the improbable, intimate account of how nine working-class boys from the American West showed the world at the 1936 Olympics in Berlin what true grit really meant. It was an unlikely quest from the start. With a team composed of the sons of loggers, shipyard workers, and farmers, the University of Washington's eight-oar crew team was never expected to defeat the elite teams of the East Coast and Great Britain, yet they did, going on to shock the world by defeating the German team rowing for Adolf Hitler. The emotional heart of the tale lies with Joe Rantz, a teenager without family or prospects, who rows not only to regain his shattered self-regard but also to find a real place for himself in the world. Drawing on the boys' own journals and vivid memories of a once-in-a-lifetime shared dream, Brown has created an unforgettable portrait of an era, a celebration of a remarkable achievement, and a chronicle of one extraordinary young man's personal quest."