

Boston Collegiate Charter School
High School Summer Reading
Choice Book List

Please refer to the summer reading requirements for each grade and level. Most high school students should choose at least one book from the following list which is organized by genre.

Science Fiction/Fantasy

At the Mountains of Madness by H.P. Lovecraft

A Lovecraft novella in which alien terror is discovered beneath the ice of an Antarctic expedition in the 1920s.

Ender's Game by Orson Scott Card

The story of Ender Williams, who has been bred to become a military genius to protect the Earth from the inevitable attack by aliens.

Fade by Robert Cormier

The story of 14 year-old Paul who learns that he has the power to become invisible. One member of his family in every generation has this ability to "fade," and he quickly learns the consequences of abusing this power.

Brave New World by Aldous Huxley

In many ways an eerily accurate work of early twentieth century science fiction; a chilling vision of a totally gene-engineered future is brought fully to life.

Blood and Chocolate by Annette Curtis Klause

A chronicle of the longings and passions of Vivian Gandillon, a teenage werewolf. She is a normal teenage girl, but occasionally her animal instincts can be stirred to cause problems for her.

Moonfall by Jack McDevitt

The futuristic tale of Charlie Haskell, U.S. vice president in the year 2024, and the country's attempt to open a moon base amidst threatening problems in outer space.

Z is for Zachariah by Robert C. O'Brien

Anne Burden and her family live in a valley that has been virtually unaffected by a nuclear holocaust that apparently no one else has survived.

The Hobbit by J. R. R. Tolkien

The story of Hobbit Bilbo Baggins as he, wizard Gandalf, and 13 dwarfs embark on an adventure in which they cross paths with trolls, elves, and other fantastical creatures and eventually leads to the discovery of a magical ring.

Elric of Melniboné by Michael Moorcock

The exiled emperor of a fallen kingdom fights both the forces of absolute chaos and the forces of absolute law as both lead to destruction.

Historical Fiction

Girl with a Pearl Earring by Tracy Chevalier

In 17-century Delft, a girl gains entrance to the Vermeer house as a servant and witnesses intrigues and artistic creation in the great painter's life.

The Red Tent by Anita Diamant

Lives of Biblical women told in the voice of Dinah, daughter of Jacob. A study of a culture of women at a time when gender and vengeance become intertwined.

The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Klay by Michael Chabon

Joe Kavalier, a young Jewish artist who has also been trained in the art of Houdini-esque escape, has just smuggled himself out of Prague and landed in New York City. His Brooklyn cousin, Sammy Clay, is looking for a partner to enter the budding industry of comic books. Together, the two create unforgettable heroes, as well as memories.

Fallen Angels by Walter Dean Myers

17-year-old Richie Perry, just out of his Harlem high school, enlists in the Army in the summer of 1967 and spends a devastating year on active duty in Vietnam.

Killer Angels by Michael Shaara

An account of the three most important days in the Civil War's battle of Gettysburg. Although fictional, the book focuses on real characters of the war, including Confederate General Robert E. Lee and the Union army's Colonel Chamberlain.

Exodus by Leon Uris

This story follows several characters' physical and spiritual journeys as it addresses the plight of the Jewish people in Europe post WWII, the exodus in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to Palestine, and the founding of Israel.

The Color Purple by Alice Walker

The triumphant, poetic story of a young black woman's transformation amid the poverty and abuse of a cruel Southern environment.

The Passion of Artemisia by Susan Vreeland

18-year-old Artemisia Gentileschi, having ruined her reputation by accusing her art teacher of rape, enters into an arranged marriage in post-Renaissance Italy and moves with her husband to Florence where her artistic talent blossoms, bringing her both fame and conflict.

Adventure/Mystery

Timeline by Michael Crichton

A thriller in which a group of historians from 1999 travel back to 1357 France, a time in which the country is engaging in civil war.

The Gold Coast by Nelson DeMille

A secure, suburban couple is thrust into the world of the mafia.

Snow Falling on Cedars by David Guterson

An exciting murder mystery concerning a Japanese man who was kept prisoner during World War II.

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime by Mark Haddon

15-year-old Christopher Boone, an autistic math genius discovers the dead body of his neighbor's poodle, Wellington, stabbed with a garden fork, and decides that, like his idol Sherlock Holmes, he's going to find the killer.

The Lovely Bones by Alice Sebold

A fourteen-year-old girl who is brutally raped and murdered looks down on her family from heaven, and narrates their stories as they deal with her death and its aftermath and try to find the culprit.

Native Son by Richard Wright

This controversial novel tells the tale of black protagonist Bigger Thomas as he is hunted and tried for the murder of a white woman. This tragic epic tale outlines the racial struggles of Chicago in the 1930s.

Literature

Frankenstein by Mary Shelley

A scientist creates life from death but forsakes his creation.

Midwives by Chris Bohjalian

A story that chronicles the events leading up to the trial of Sibyl Danforth, a respected midwife accused of manslaughter in a small town in Vermont. The trial comes to not only accuse Danforth, but a criticism of midwifery in general as the case meets the public eye.

The Perks of Being A Wallflower by Stephen Chbosky

The summer before 10th grade, Charlie's best friend committed suicide. Since then, he has grown away from his friends and spends his time observing others, trying to discover what makes them tick.

Charms for the Easy Life by Kaye Gibbons

Three strong women prevail through crushing difficulties by relying on folk wisdom and solutions handed down from generation to generation.

Memoirs of a Geisha by Arthur Golden

Follows the story of how nine-year-old Chiyo, sold with her sister into slavery by their father after their mother's death, becomes Sayuri, a leading geisha of the 1930s and 40s, accomplished in the art of entertaining men.

The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini

The heartbreaking story of a friendship as it is affected overtime by the political and social atmosphere in Afghanistan.

A Prayer for Owen Meany by John Irving

Owen Meany is a dwarfish boy with a strange voice who accidentally kills his best friend's mother with a baseball and believes that he is an instrument of God, to be redeemed by martyrdom.

The Secret Life of Bees by Sue Monk Kidd

Taking place in 1964 Georgia after the passage of the Civil Rights Act, 14 year-old Lily runs away from home to trace her dead mother's heritage in South Carolina and learns about her mother's mysterious past.

The Bean Trees by Barbara Kingsolver

An adolescent girl travels out West adventurously, acting as mother to an Indian child and caregiver to refugees.

Pigs in Heaven by Barbara Kingsolver

The sequel to The Bean Trees, as the heroine forges on in her new life as mature mother and voice for change in her community.

One Hundred Years of Solitude by Gabriel Garcia Marquez

This novel channels 100 years of life in the village of Macondo and its founding family, the Buendías as names and stories are repeated and love and conflicts are faced.

Beloved by Toni Morrison

The unique writing story of Toni Morrison follows the life of an escaped slave mother as she is haunted by the ghost of her baby whom she killed in order to spare its life as a slave.

The Time Traveler's Wife by Audrey Niffenegger

A literally timeless love story of a couple in which the man does not live in a chronological pattern. Henry appears to a child Clare, having already married her in the future and Clare, in the future, meets a child Henry who is yet to have his first interaction with her.

Bel Canto by Anna Patchett

Somewhere in South America, in the home of the country's vice president, a birthday party is being held for Japanese businessman Mr. Hosokawa. His birthday present is a performance by renowned opera singer Roxanne Coss. When the party is interrupted by terrorists and the partygoers taken hostage, they find friendship, compassion, and even love as they fear for their lives.

My Sister's Keeper by Jodi Picoult

The story of Anna, a girl genetically engineered at birth to be a perfect donor match for her cancerous sister. Anna sues her family for rights to her own body, causing the family to deal with questions of justice, life, and death.

My Name is Asher Lev by Chaim Potok

A very true-to-life story of an artistic boy whose talents and aspirations clash with the old-world values of his father.

Classics

Wuthering Heights by Emily Bronte

The tempestuous and mythic story of Catherine Earnshaw, the precocious daughter of the house, and the ruggedly handsome, uncultured founding her father brings home and names Heathcliff, is played out against the backdrop of English moors no less wild and raw than the love they develop for one another.

The Good Earth by Pearl S. Buck

A novel of Chinese peasant life and of Wang Lung, who with his wife O-lan raise a large, struggling family that maintains their own path in life through hard work, bitter luck and a will to survive which is severely tested by drought, by the jealousy of others around them, and by their own demons.

2001: A Space Odyssey by Arthur C. Clarke

Written in 1968, this is the story of scientists who discover a 3 million year old mysterious monolith that releases a powerful signal towards Saturn. A crew of astronauts is sent on an expedition that results in a quest to overthrow a digital psychopath.

Siddhartha by Hermann Hesse

A novel about the life of Siddhartha Guatama exploring the Buddhist and Hindu ideals of enlightenment.

Catch 22 by Heller Joseph

A satirical novel in which Captain Yossarian confronts the hypocrisy of war and bureaucracy as he frantically attempts to survive.

The Jungle by Upton Sinclair

Originally published in 1906, *The Jungle* sent shock waves throughout the United States resulting in cries for labor and agricultural reforms. Sinclair was a devout Socialist who traveled to Chicago to document the working conditions of the world-famous stockyards. It is indeed rare that a book should have such a political impact, but it is apparent that his words form a political agenda of their own.

A Tree Grows in Brooklyn by Betty Smith

Francie Nolan grows up in the slums of Brooklyn at the turn of the century. The less-favorite child in a dysfunctional family, she struggles to survive and find a place for herself in the world.

The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck

A classic novel following the impoverished Joad family as they deal with the aftermath of the Great Depression.

Dracula by Bram Stoker

The quintessential story of horror and suspense that follows vampire Count Dracula, a tragic character preying in the innocent and helpless by means of desire as he is hunted by Jonathan Harker and friends.

The Picture of Dorian Gray by Oscar Wilde

Dorian Gray cannot stand the thought that one day his looks will fade. So when he finds the magic means to keep his youth eternal, he grabs at it, failing to recognize its dark side.

NON-FICTION

Biography/Memoir

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin by Benjamin Franklin

Perhaps the most unbiased autobiography of a politician, Franklin details his life as a printer, inventor, scientist, and revolutionary.

Mountains Beyond Mountains by Tracy Kidder

The book delves into the life of Dr. Paul Farmer, infectious-disease specialist, anthropologist and professor, who chose to break from convention, follow his ideals and put his heart and energy into the lofty goal of curing the world.

Angela's Ashes by Frank McCourt

The comical, endearing, and saddening storytelling memories of Frank McCourt about his experience growing up in an impoverished family in Ireland in the mid 1900s.

The Color of Water by James McBride

A black man's tribute to his white mother, a white Polish-Jew who moved to New York City. It is a compelling story, addressing issues of racial identity with compassion.

When I Was Puerto Rican by Esmeralda Santiago

Esmeralda and her seven siblings live in a corrugated metal shack in Puerto Rico. She is uprooted as a result of poverty and her parents' quarreling and suffers blows to her ego from their expectations of her. The girl goes to New York, where her grandmother lives, and must rely on her intelligence and talents to help her survive in an alien world in which being Puerto Rican is not advantageous.

Me Talk Pretty One Day by David Sedaris

A collection of 27 autobiographical essays about a variety of topics, such as overcoming a lisp, learning to play the guitar, trying to master French, or taking an IQ test. Laugh-out-loud funny.

The Double Helix by James D. Watson

A fascinating autobiographical account of how the structure of DNA was discovered.

Black Boy by Richard Wright

The autobiography of Richard Wright growing up in Mississippi in poverty, hunger, hatred, and fear. It deals with the themes of injustice and human suffering.

The Autobiography of Malcolm X by Malcolm X

A strikingly honest and vivid narrative of black power movement leader Malcolm X's transformation from self-destructive, petty criminal to articulate political activist.

Journalism/Current Events

In Cold Blood by Truman Capote

An unforgettable, justly famous "real life novel" of two murderers: their crime, their wild flight, their being brought to justice. A classic of investigative writing.

A Short History of Nearly Everything by Bill Bryson

A journalist interviews scientists to interpret complex science for lay people.

Newjack by Ted Conover

An investigative journalist goes undercover as a prison guard at Sing Sing Prison and writes about his experiences.

Fast Food Nation by Eric Schlosser

Schlosser's incisive history of the development of American fast food indicts the industry for some shocking crimes against humanity, including systematically destroying the American diet and landscape, and undermining our values and our economy.

Sports

It's Not About the Bike: My Journey Back to Life by Lance Armstrong

The story of the seven-time Tour de France cyclist winner as he battles and defeats stage three testicular cancer.

Bang the Drum Slowly by Mark Harris

Follows a somewhat eccentric star pitcher and a terminally ill third-string catcher during a heated pennant race. Considered one of the best baseball novels ever written.

Moneyball by Michael Lewis

Lewis examines how in 2002 the Oakland Athletics achieved a spectacular winning record while having the smallest player payroll of any major league baseball team. Given the heavily publicized salaries of players for teams like the Boston Red Sox or New York Yankees, baseball insiders and fans assume that the biggest talents deserve and get the biggest salaries. However, argues Lewis, little-known numbers and statistics matter more. Chronicles the life of Billy Beane, general manager of the A's, focusing on his uncanny ability to find and sign the right players.

Bringing Down the House by Ben Mezrich

A small blackjack club composed of overachieving MIT students develops from an experiment in counting cards on M.I.T.'s campus into a ring of card savants with a system for playing large and winning big. In less than two years they take some of the world's most sophisticated casinos for more than three million dollars. But their success also brings with it the formidable ire of casino owners and launches them into the seedy underworld of corporate Vegas.

The Babe Ruth Story by Babe Ruth and Bob Considine

A personal look at Babe Ruth's career as a great pitcher and hitter for the Boston Red Sox and the New York Yankees. His narrative and love for the game document American heritage and identity.