

25 Book Standard

In order for students to meet the 25 Book Standard, students must read and document one book per month. At the end of each month, the number of books students have completed will be posted in the school. Those students who have NOT fulfilled the requirement will be assigned Saturday School until they have completed the previous month's quota. (Students who refuse to attend Saturday School will be assigned time in the ALC for silent reading.)

Recommended Books

The 9/11 Report: A Graphic Adaptation. Sid Jacobson. Illus. Hill & Wang.

Interpreting the official report from the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States in graphic-novel format provides a wide range of readers with the opportunity to understand and consider the Commission's findings.

A Place to Stand. Jimmy Santiago Baca.

In this memoir, Baca describes prison as "the most frightening nightmare I have ever experienced" (5). Learning to read and write provided Baca the means to stave off insanity through long months in isolation and years in the system. He recalls his own family dynamics throughout the book, looking at the root causes of family violence. Readers are also introduced to many fellow prisoners and their stories. The book is also hopeful, for Baca's use of reading and writing--his ability to construct a counter narrative to the one created for him by society and prison officials--allowed him to be a witness rather than a victim. (244). This has been a hit book at Roosevelt. Danica Fierman, at Jefferson, says she can't keep a copy on the shelf. NY: Grove Atlantic.

A Sense of the World: How a Blind Man Became History's Greatest Traveler. Jason Roberts.

Blind since the age of 25, James Holman became a well-recognized and admired figure of the early 19th century. His inspiring story of personal accomplishment and unusual (for the time) interest in cultural exploration fell into obscurity until Roberts rediscovered Holman's journals, by serendipity, more than 150 years later.

Barefootin': Life Lessons on the Road to Freedom. Unita Blackwell. Blackwell, the granddaughter of a murdered farm worker, grew up to be the first black woman mayor in the state of Mississippi. This Civil Rights veteran shows how personal responsibility must be accompanied by social support for an individual to become successful.

Beatles Art: Fantastic New Artwork of the Fab Four. Linda Webb.

With 150 pieces of art by 100 artists inspired by the work and lives of these ever-popular musicians, this volume will inspire teens just beginning to discover the scope and influence of the group and its individual members.

Black Swan Green. David Mitchell.

Teens are sure to recognize someone they know in the character of the 13-year-old who battles his stammer, navigates the social hierarchy of his schoolmates, and watches the slow disintegration of his parents' marriage. An achingly credible, month-by-month account of growing up in a small English town in 1982.

The Boy Who Fell Out of the Sky: A True Story. Ken Dornstein.

Seventeen years after his older brother, David, died in the airline bombing over Lockerbie, Scotland, Dornstein turns to David's notebooks as a resource to draw out a life lost young and unexpectedly. Both brothers demonstrate skill and warmth as artists of the written word.

Breaking Through. Francisco Jimenez.

Francisco Jimenez continues the moving tale of his early youth begun with a dozen autobiographical short stories in *The Circuit*. *Breaking Through* chronicles the author's teenage years. At the age of 14, Francisco and his family are caught by la migra (immigration officers) and forced to leave their California home, but soon find their way back. The author explores the prejudice and challenges they face while also relaying universal adolescent experiences of school, dances and romances.

Bronx Masquerade. Nikki Grimes.

Open Mike Friday is everyone's favorite day in Mr. Ward's English class. And while angry Tyrone Bittings finds dubious comfort in denying hope: "Life is cold. Future?...wish there was some future to talk about. I could use me some future," overweight Janelle Battle hopes to be seen for what she really is: "for I am coconut / and the heart of me / is sweeter / than you know" They are all here: the tall girl, the tough-talking rapper, the jock, the beauty queen, the teenage mom, the artist, and many more. By book's end, all the voices have blended seamlessly into a multicultural chorus laden with a message that is probably summed up best by pretty girl Tanisha Scott's comment, "I am not a skin color or a hank of wavy hair. I am a person, and if they don't get that, it's their problem, not mine."

Buja's Diary. Seyeong O. tr. from Korean by Moon-ok Lee & Nicholas Devernay.

Thirteen short stories by a master of *manhwa* (comics) offer an excellent introduction to O's various black-and-white art styles as well as insight into contemporary Korea's culture and history.

Cotton. Christopher Wilson.

This imaginative tragicomedy in which one individual experiences life as a black boy, a white man, a white woman, and a black woman in the space of 30 years challenges readers to examine what truly defines our humanity.

Daughter of the Ganges: A Memoir. Asha Miró.

Adopted from an Indian orphanage by Spanish parents, the author visited her birth country as a teenager and later returned to make a documentary film as she sought any evidence of her roots. Crossing cultures and choices of media with which to investigate her past, Miró offers considerable insight on how adoption affects one's sense of identity.

Deadly, Unna. Phillip Gwynne.

This Australian book won the Children Book Council of Australia's Book of the Year Award in 1999. *Deadly Unna* is a story about racism, but it is also a story about much more - friendship, family and self-identity being among the themes explored. Adoption committee members were split on the book. Teachers who tried it found that boys loved it. Recommended as a 10th grade coming of age story.

The Demon under the Microscope: From Battlefield Hospitals to Nazi Labs, One Doctor's Heroic Search for the World's First Miracle Drug. Thomas Hager.

This fascinating account shows how the discovery and early uses of sulfa drugs dramatically changed the treatment of wartime wounded, and informed the protocols by which modern drug testing is undertaken. Military and medical history are melded into a singular narrative.

Disco for the Departed. Collin Cotterill.

A Laotian coroner, who is also a spirit host, investigates a possible crime scene at the presidential compound in a remote province while his lab assistant, a capable worker with Down syndrome, sets off on a harrowing journey in order to keep his word to the doctor. This seamless story offers an engrossing mystery, a bit of mysticism, and unusually well-rendered and engaging characters.

Fifty Degrees Below. Kim Stanley Robinson.

In the throes of a deadly, intense climate shift, scientists, governmental agencies, and large corporations all play a role in trying to avert a global disaster. Second in an exciting futuristic trilogy, this captivating eco-adventure may serve many readers as a wake-up call to the serious strains that we put on Earth.

The Girl from Charnelle: A Novel. K. L. Cook.

The affair between a 16-year-old girl and her father's poker buddy in a small Texas town, in 1960, is filled with suspense, tragedy, and heartache. An unforgettable coming-of-age story.

Harrowing the Dragon. Patricia A. McKillip.

Elegant, often humorous, prose explores the nature of love, friendship, wisdom, and change in these 15 tales of science fiction and magic, and clever retellings of familiar fairy tales.

The Heartless Stone: A Journey through the World of Diamonds, Deceit, and Desire. Tom Zoellner.

The grim reality of the politically charged labor, fanciful marketing, and secretive industry established by diamond merchants and myths that they propagated are presented in this warts-and-all exposé that will attract teens in search of honesty over romantic hype.

Imani All Mine. Connie Porter.

Told in poetic, street-savvy language, *Imani All Mine* is the story of an African American teen named Tasha. Pregnant as the result of rape, Tasha is an independent, thoughtful young woman who finds that the teen who raped her is attending her high school. Porter depicts Tasha's world in clear, often stark, terms. As Tasha details family and community ills, the novel becomes a window into a youth's interpretation of inner-city life. Imani explores issues relevant to our students from the perspective of one of their own. Besides rape and teen pregnancy, issues of race, class, and gender are developed. Graphic language and images.

Kindred. Octavia Butler.

Thematically and textually, this historical science-fiction novel is about crossing boundaries. As Butler tells the story of a young African American woman who is transported from her southern California home in 1976 to the American South just after the Civil War, she examines deep-rooted questions about the long lasting impact of slavery. This story is also about literacy, gender roles, power and resistance. Students find the work compelling to read; however, the novel contains vivid depictions of violence, racism, and racial epithets.

Let It Be Morning. Sayed Kashua.

Arab-Israelis caught between political affiliations are honestly and compellingly represented in this fast-paced story about a young journalist and family man who returns to his small village after years in Tel Aviv.

Malcolm X A Graphic Biography Andrew Helfer and Randy DuBurke

This brief novelization opens with a dramatic image of Malcolm posing with a rifle, highlighting the conflict that defined his short life. The story begins shortly before his death, and the sense of tension established by his looming assassination is maintained throughout the book. Those already familiar with Malcolm X's autobiography will find a compelling retelling of his life, and those new to the subject will be introduced to a whirlwind tour of mid-20th-century history through the eyes of an influential figure in the Civil Rights Movement.

Mama's Girl. Veronica Chambers.

An autobiographical account of her childhood in Brooklyn during the 70s and 80s, *Mama's Girl* recounts Veronica Chambers' rise to academic success despite many obstacles. Chambers' mother was often abusive, and almost always completely closed emotionally toward her daughter. Born the only daughter of African American parents with Caribbean lineage, Chambers follows her mother after her parents' bitter divorce. While Chambers' story is dramatic and at points painful, it is the sense of optimism and determination that makes this story shine.

Martrys' Crossing. Amy Wilentz.

Amy Wilentz's first novel is distressingly timely in its release. Arab-Israeli strife is back with a vengeance. Israel is bombing Lebanon; Hamas and Hezbollah are bombing Israel; the Israeli army is strafing Gaza; the Palestinian police are strafing Israeli checkpoints. Israelis suffer, Palestinians suffer, and Westerners shake their heads in disbelief. The conflict is told through the story of an Israeli soldier and the family of a Palestinian boy who sat a checkpoint, unable to cross to receive medical attention. This novel helps readers move from the geo-political to the very real lives of Israelis and Palestinians.

The Meteor Hunt: The First English Translation of Verne's Original Manuscript. Jules Verne. tr. from French by Frederick Paul Walter & Walter James Miller.

This newly recovered and restored manuscript by the 19th-century French science-fiction novelist feels fresh and contemporary. Two rival astronomers make the discovery that a giant meteor is hurtling toward us—and it is composed of gold!

Monster. Myers, Walter Dean.

Steve Harmon is a 16-year-old African-American who is on trial for his supposed role in the fatal shooting of a convenience-store owner. However, it remains unclear for the reader as to whether or not Steve is guilty. Myers' novel, written more as a teleplay is a quick and appealing read for teens. The story develops some critical, contemporary issues regarding age, race, and class.

Path of Destruction: A Novel of the Old Republic. Drew Karpshyn.

Yoda's Rule of Two—master and apprentice—is provided with a satisfying history for *Star Wars* fans. For readers who aren't as familiar with this universe, Karpshyn offers an excellent introduction through its backstory for the important character of Darth Bane.

The Princess of Denmark: An Elizabethan Theater Mystery Featuring Nicholas Bracewell. Edward Marston.

Told from the viewpoint of the book holder in an Elizabethan acting troupe, this story moves swiftly and credibly as the actors are caught in a plot of murder, love, and deception.

Right By My Side. David Haynes.

Marshall Field Finney is a high school sophomore who lives in a housing project in St. Louis. Throughout this book, Marshall questions his family, his friends, and himself. He is angry about many things and develops a very tough, wisecracking exterior. Haynes creates a very believable and empathetic character in Marshall, one that many high school students will be able to identify with. *Right By My Side* is the 1994 winner of the ALA's Best Book for Young Adults Award.

Secondhand World. Katherine Min.

An insightful and engaging Korean American high school student struggles with her perceptions of herself, her parents' seeming rejection of her as an individual, and the increasing expectations made of her by another outsider, an albino boy.

The Secret River. Kate Grenville.

Sentenced to servitude in Australia after being convicted of theft in 19th-century England, a young man eventually gains his freedom and becomes a homesteader. Unwillingly, he is drawn into an increasingly violent clash between British and Aborigine cultures. (Oct.)

Silk Road to Ruin: Is Central Asia the New Middle East? Ted Rall.

Cartoon journalist Rall explored the former USSR states up close and with daring personal encounters. His narrative report is incisive, insightful, and complete with graphic novella asides.

The Skin I'm In. Sharon Flake.

Maleeka Madison is an African American seventh grader who suffers from low self-esteem as a result of teasing about her skin color. Trying to convince herself and others that these taunts mean nothing to her, she gets herself into trouble. She feels isolated until she meets Miss Saunders, a teacher who understands her feelings. This story is written in an easy, uncomplicated prose, making it accessible to most all students. Themes of race, self-esteem, and gender play prominently in the book.

Speak. Laurie Hale Anderson.

Melinda is entering high school and the only person she is talking to is the reader. "Every time I try to talk to my parents or a teacher, I sputter and freeze..." Melinda's family is emotionally remote, and classmates shun her at school because they blame her for busting up a big party. This novel deals with very difficult themes, but one cannot help but come away from this book a more compassionate person. Easy reading but mature subject matter. This story centers on the trauma of sexual assault. Teachers will likely want to consider whether their individual classes are emotionally equipped for the difficult details about rape.

Two Old Women: An Alaska Legend of Betrayal, Courage, and Survival. Velma Wallis.

Author Wallis grew up in northern Alaska, and in this book she pays homage to a familiar tribal legend. The story is a recreation of a native Alaskan tale about two old women who are abandoned by their tribe during a time of famine. This version, which has a happy conclusion, won the 1993 Western States Book Award. Deals with issues of age, hunger, solidarity, and struggle.

Voyage of the Turtle: In Pursuit of the Earth's Last Dinosaur. Carl Safina.

Safina lovingly portrays the migrations, needs, and challenges to the continued presence of Leatherback, Green, and Loggerhead turtles that inhabit both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

Warriors Don't Cry. Melba Patillo Beals.

Melba Patillo Beals, one of the nine Little Rock Arkansas students to integrate Central High School in 1957, recounts their struggle to overcome segregation and institutionalized racism. Blending adult commentary with teenage experience, this book grants the reader insight into one of the most compelling civil rights battles in our nation's history. The story underscores that, regardless of age, people can enact change. The text reads easily, but does not spare the details of the physical and psychological abuse suffered. Also, racial epithets are cited in the text. Because of the political and emotional content, the teacher should be prepared to open the classroom to intense discussions and activities around race and racism.

Wild Meat & Bully Burgers. Lois Ann Yamanaka.

In her debut novel, the author presents the history of a Japanese American family living in Hawaii in the 1970s. The narrator, Lovey Nariyoshi, tells her story of growing up in a white ("haole") culture that keeps her family segregated. "No japs on TV," observes Lovey, "except Mrs. Livingston and Kay-to." This engrossing novel is strongly woven together, with chapters that swing from the heartfelt, childhood memories of Lovey's father, Hubert, to the fiendish behavior of her neighbors. This book is currently under consideration by the book adoption committee.