

May 2020

Dear Parents,

We are happy to share the following lists of books assigned for Camelot students to enjoy over Summer Break. The goal of summer reading is to maintain reading skills over the summer, expand literary exposure, set the stage for an inspired and hopeful return to the new school year, and provide fodder for orientation discussions and class activities. We often choose books related to the school theme for the year, which for 2020-2021 will be RESILIENCE.

I have made a video to explain the summer reading directions: <https://youtu.be/dCaOchWw4tY>, or you can read the explanation below. You must reply BY JUNE 2 to tell me what books your students have selected and to confirm you understand the expectations.

The entire faculty have come together to offer recommendations of books for the Camelot family to enjoy this summer and the attached lists come from their passions. Due to the unpredictability of future social contact policies, we are not going to ask students to come to Camelot to take AR tests throughout the summer, as we have in the past. Instead, we offer what your teachers have read or plan to read this summer and they will grade assignments to ensure student accountability.

Each student will read a total of **FOUR (4)** books this summer:

1. One book from the *Faculty-Recommended Fiction Book List*
2. One book from the *Faculty-Recommended Non-fiction Book List*
3. A *Class Book* based on what class they will take next year (more explanation below)
4. An *Orientation Theme Book*

We invite all family members to share in the summer reading experience! Parents can choose one of the *Orientation Theme Books* on the list below and participate in the discussion to be held on Thursday, August 27 (time and format TBD). **At the very least, we need you to help your student choose from the selections and are asking that YOU reply to this email confirming their selections after discussing them with your student.**

**Choosing books may not be a short process.** Making individualized decisions about what to read to make this experience a valuable one will take some planning, thoughtfulness, and time. Please set aside 30-60 minutes to explore these options with your students and to engage in conversation about what they will enjoy reading and what their goals are in completing these assignments. We encourage you to use reviews from Amazon and Goodreads to find out what each of these is about. Look at the assignments on the Google Classroom as well so you know the expectations. **Please reply to this email by June 2nd with your selections and confirmation that you understand the expectations.**

Please note that the books listed with \* may contain descriptions of violence or some sexual content. Many of the books contain cursing. We are careful to choose books that are not gratuitous, but Upper School literature sometimes contains controversial content. While books are often a safe means through which students can process complex topics like sexuality, violence, substance abuse, suicide and racism to prepare to face the

myriad of experiences, issues, and people they will encounter in life, you and your student know your readiness for such content better than anyone. We suggest that you talk in advance about what your students should do and who they can turn to if they encounter content which they do not understand, or which makes them uncomfortable. If you are at all concerned that your student may be exposed to particular content, you can research the books at [www.commonensemedia.org](http://www.commonensemedia.org) or other online sources, and share your concerns and initial selections with Ms. Amy at [amy@camelotacademy.org](mailto:amy@camelotacademy.org), and she can help advise you.

**Your student should join the Google Classroom with the code “cxivovs” to access the assignments that go with these books.** Four assignments are posted there, one per book. Students should complete an assignment after finishing a book, before starting the next book. Some of these may take more time than AR tests have taken in the past, so please plan accordingly and do not leave all of this work until the end of the summer. Students are given credit for a book when they have completed one of the assignment options for that book to the satisfaction of the teacher who recommended that book. If work is unsatisfactory, the teacher will return that assignment with an explanation and the student will receive a notification in their email. They will need to revise and re-submit the assignment. Some of these assignments will be used as pre-tests to help assess student placement in the fall.

Please let us know early in the summer if you need assistance. Students who do not complete the requirements **BY THE MORNING OF THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL, AUGUST 26**, will need to attend after school Study Hall starting on Monday, August 31 for each day their assignments are late. You will be able to assess your student’s progress on the Google Classroom.

We need the help of parents to keep students accountable for truly reading books from cover to cover. Students can use online summaries and reviews for assistance, but the only way they can be exposed to language at a level that prepares them for reading and writing at the college-level and beyond is by engaging directly with the original text. Students can sign up for books they have read before, but they must re-read them from cover-to-cover. Audio-books are fine, but research shows that students should be following along with the text while listening for optimal learning.

On Monday, June 1, at 8:30 AM, Amy will host a Q&A session via Zoom for those of you who have more questions about our summer reading assignments. Please feel free to join her there.

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/72538732697?pwd=eGcrMFc4QVRzZlhzM0laZlNUcGkvQT09>

Meeting ID: 725 3873 2697

Password: 9c9b2R

**Please COPY THE LIST BELOW into your response to this email BY JUNE 2 to:**

1. Confirm that you understand the requirements of Summer Reading,
2. Inform us that your student has successfully logged onto the Summer Reading Google Classroom and you all have reviewed the assignments,
3. List the books you and your students have decided they will read by filling in the blanks (you can email [amy@camelotacademy.org](mailto:amy@camelotacademy.org) if choices change - we will accept changes until August 20):
  - a. STUDENT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Orientation Theme Book: \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Faculty-Recommended Fiction: \_\_\_\_\_

- c. Faculty-Recommended Non-fiction: \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Class book: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Advise us that you have a plan to acquire each of these books either in a digital or physical form. One of the possible assessments involves annotating, so while you might be able to check some of these out from a digital library, you will need to “own” one if your student plans to do that assignment. Those notes can be done on paper (and the book turned in briefly to the teacher) or digitally and exported. Waitlists for digital books at libraries have gotten longer, so you might want to go ahead and request if you plan to go that route!

We recognize that we are relying on parents more than ever during this COVID-19 quarantine and we appreciate you very much! We hope reading and completing thoughtful assignments will be an enjoyable and engaging way to spend some of the down time that students will inevitably have this summer. Please let us know if we can help you to make selections or to support your students in any way!

Sincerely,  
The Camelot Faculty

**CLASS BOOKS: Choose one of the following based on which class you plan to take next year. If you are unsure, please ask your student or email [amy@camelotacademy.org](mailto:amy@camelotacademy.org):**

- New to Upper School - coming from another school or from Camelot Middle Grades - The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton
- Honors English: The Flight to Arras by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry
- Regular Upper School English: On the Come Up by Angie Thomas
- AP English: The Jungle by Upton Sinclair

**FACULTY-RECOMMENDED FICTION BOOKS - Choose ONE of the following:**

**From Ms. Magda:**

- The Sheltering Sky by Paul Bowles\*
- Saturday by Ian McEwan\*
- The Song of Achilles by Madeline Miller\*

**From Ms. Judith:**

- A Boy and His Dog at the End of the World by C.A. Fletcher

**From Mr. Thomas:**

- The Player Piano by Kurt Vonnegut
- Whereas by Layli Long Soldier
- The Dharma Bums by Jack Kerouac\*
- A Good Man is Hard to Find by Flanner O’Conner
- A Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansberry
- O Pioneers by Willa Cather\*

**From Ms. Amy:**

- Nickel Boys by Colson Whitehead\*
- Gentleman in Moscow by Amor Towles

- Where the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens\*
- Turtles all the Way Down by John Green\*
- The Bird King by G. Willow Wilson\*
- The Great Alone by Kristin Hannah\*
- Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine by Gail Honeyman
- The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood\*
- Before We Were Yours by Lisa Wingate
- Persuasion by Jane Austen
- The Dutch House by Ann Patchett
- Circe by Madeline Miller\*
- The Bean Trees by Barbara Kingsolver\*
- Between Shades of Gray by Ruta Sepetys\*
- Scythe by Neil Shusterman\*
- Plainsong by Kent Haruf

**FACULTY-RECOMMENDED NON-FICTION BOOKS - Choose ONE of the following:**

**From Ms. Magda:**

- Me Talk Pretty one Day by David Sedaris
- The Spy Who Loved by Clare Mulley\*

**From Ms. Judith:**

- Born a Crime by Trevor Noah\*
- Leonardo DaVinci by Walter Isaacson\*

**From Mr. Thomas:**

- The Peoples History of the United States by Howard Zinn

**From Ms. Amy:**

- Educated: A Memoir by Tara Westover\*
- The Library by Susan Orlean
- Midnight in Chernobyl by Adam Higginbotham\*
- Talking to Strangers by Malcolm Gladwell
- Becoming Nicole: The Transformation of an American Family by Amy Ellis Nutt
- Just Mercy by Bryan Stevenson
- Popular: The Power of Likability in a Status-Obsessed World by Mitch Prinstein
- The Splendid and the Vile by Erik Larson
- Born to Run: The Hidden Tribe, the Ultra-Runners, and the Greatest Race the World has Never Seen by Christopher McDougall
- Can't Hurt Me by David Goggins
- Becoming by Michelle Obama
- Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier by Ishamel Beah\*
- Mindset: The New Psychology of Success by Carol Dweck
- Grit: the Power of Passion and Perseverance by Angela Duckworth

**ORIENTATION THEME BOOKS-RESILIENCE: Choose ONE of the following to discuss at**

**Orientation.**

- The Swerve: How the World Became Modern by Steven Greenblat - Ms. Erin offers a book that combines her passions for manuscripts, history and art! This non-fiction account of the discovery

of a poem traces how its revolutionary ideas questioning accepted theories about religion and matter fueled the Renaissance.

- [The Analects of Confucius translated by Burton Watson](#) - This collection of conversations between the ancient philosopher and his disciples continues to inspire and guide people around the world, including Mr. Tom. Filled with humor and sarcasm, the conversations provoke meaningful philosophical musings on the organization of society and the role of the individual.
- [Secondhand Time\\*](#) by Svetlana Alexievich - One of the best books Mr. Thomas has read, this collection of interviews conducted between 1990 and 2010 are cut together to create a picture of life in Russia after the fall of the Soviet Union and as Putin rises to power. It's bleak, but beautiful.
- [Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience and Redemption\\*](#) by Laura Hillenbrand - So unbelievable that it reads like fiction, this true story of Olympian Louis Zamperini, who survived being lost at sea after his Army Airforce bomber crashes, only to endure torture in a Japanese POW prison, is one of Ms. Amy's favorites.
- ["The Ballad of The Sad Cafe" AND "The Member of the Wedding"](#) by Carson McCullers - Ms. Magda picked two novellas, often found in the same collection of stories, that trace the transformation of characters through various tribulations: Amelia Evans is the subject of small town rumors and speculation as she opens a café and falls in love with a hunchback; and Frankie Addams is a socially-isolated 12-year-old who navigates adolescence as her family prepares for her brother's wedding.
- [Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life](#) by Anne Lamott - One of our resident authors, Mr. Scott, found inspiration in the witty anecdotes and memorable advice that Lamott shares about both writing and about finding courage and motivation.