

Byram Hills High School
Summer Reading List
2010

| Title | Author(s) | Blurb (descriptions from Amazon, Google Books, Books in Print, Wikipedia, Baker & Taylor) |
|--|------------------------------------|--|
| <i>Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter</i> | Seth Grahame-Smith | Abraham Lincoln, having realized that his mother's death was caused by a vampire, embarks on a plan of revenge that takes him all the way to the White House. |
| <i>The Alchemist</i> | Paulo Coelho | An Andalusian shepherd boy named Santiago travels from his homeland in Spain to the Egyptian desert in search of a treasure buried in the Pyramids. Along the way he meets a Gypsy woman, a man who calls himself king, and an alchemist, all of whom point Santiago in the direction of his quest. No one knows what the treasure is, or if Santiago will be able to surmount the obstacles along the way. But what starts out as a journey to find worldly goods turns into a discovery of the treasures found within. |
| <i>Angels and Demons</i> | Dan Brown | World-renowned Harvard symbologist Robert Langdon is summoned to a Swiss research facility to analyze a mysterious symbol seared into the chest of a murder victim, where he discovers evidence of the resurgence of an ancient brotherhood with a vendetta against the Catholic Church. |
| <i>Atlas Shrugged</i> | Ayn Rand | A satire on the follies and dangers of collectivism in which the United States is faced with the prospect of economic collapse when the country's leading innovators and industrialists go into hiding. |
| <i>Ballistics</i> | Billy Collins | Accessibility is the word that comes immediately to mind when considering Billy Collins's poetry and this collection will surely add to his popularity and praise. Few, if any, poets writing today can match his combination of wit, humor, and irony with equal measures of close observation, intelligence, and passion. Most of his poems can be appreciated with a single reading, but many reveal deeper thought and emotion with repeated readings. |
| <i>Big Mouth and Ugly Girl</i> | Joyce Carol Oates | A high school junior leaps to her classmate's defense when his throwaway joke about blowing up the school makes him a suspected terrorist. "The relationship between the two grows credibly and compellingly, against a convincing high school backdrop." |
| <i>The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind: Creating Currents of Electricity and Hope</i> | William Kamkwamba and Bryan Mealer | Discarded motor parts, PVC pipe, and an old bicycle wheel may be junk to most people, but in the inspired hands of William Kamkwamba, they are instruments of opportunity. Growing up amid famine and poverty in rural Malawi, wind was one of the few abundant resources available, and the inventive fourteen-year-old saw its energy as a way to power his dreams. "With a windmill, we'd finally release ourselves from the troubles of darkness and hunger," he realized. |

Byram Hills High School
Summer Reading List
2010

| Title | Author(s) | Blurb (descriptions from Amazon, Google Books, Books in Print, Wikipedia, Baker & Taylor) |
|--|------------------|--|
| <i>Brave New World</i> | Aldous Huxley | "Community, Identity, Stability" is the motto of Aldous Huxley's utopian World State. Here everyone consumes daily grams of soma, to fight depression, babies are born in laboratories, and the most popular form of entertainment is a "Feelie," a movie that stimulates the senses of sight, hearing, and touch. Though there is no violence and everyone is provided for, Bernard Marx feels something is missing and senses his relationship with a young woman has the potential to be much more than the confines of their existence allow. |
| <i>A Brief History of Time</i> | Stephen Hawking | Provides an introduction to today's scientific ideas about the cosmos and reviews past theories. Also covers black holes, quarks, antimatter, and other mysteries of physics. First published in 1988, Hawking's work has sold more than 9 million copies and continues to be a perennial bestseller. |
| <i>Day of Empire: How Hyperpowers Rise to Global Dominance—And Why they Fall</i> (Mandatory AP World Selection) | Amy Chua | The reasons for the rise and fall of world empires have long been debated by historians. Chua, a professor of law at Yale, offers a novel and provocative take on the rise and decline of some of them. Although she acknowledges the role of military power, she asserts that a common thread found in empires as diverse as the Roman, Mongol, and British was a willingness to tolerate the ethnic, religious, and social diversity of the peoples they ruled while harnessing their particular talents. |
| <i>Einstein's Dreams</i> | Alan Lightman | A modern classic, <i>Einstein's Dreams</i> is a fictional collage of stories dreamed by Albert Einstein in 1905, when he worked in a patent office in Switzerland. As the defiant but sensitive young genius is creating his theory of relativity, a new conception of time, he imagines many possible worlds. In one, time is circular, so that people are fated to repeat triumphs and failures over and over. In another, there is a place where time stands still, visited by lovers and parents clinging to their children. In another, time is a nightingale, sometimes trapped by a bell jar. |
| <i>Ender's Game</i> | Orson Scott Card | Aliens have attacked Earth twice and almost destroyed the human species. To make sure humans win the next encounter, the world government has taken to breeding military geniuses -- and then training them in the arts of war... The early training, not surprisingly, takes the form of 'games'... Ender Wiggin is a genius among geniuses; he wins all the games... He is smart enough to know that time is running out. But is he smart enough to save the planet? |

Byram Hills High School
Summer Reading List
2010

| Title | Author(s) | Blurb (descriptions from Amazon, Google Books, Books in Print, Wikipedia, Baker & Taylor) |
|--|------------------|---|
| <i>Falling Man</i> (Grades 11 and 12) | Don DeLillo | Keith Neudecker, a lawyer and survivor of the 9/11 attack, arrives on his estranged wife Lianne's doorstep, covered with soot and blood, carrying someone else's briefcase. In the days and weeks that follow 9/11, moments of connection alternate with complete withdrawal from his wife and young son, Justin. |
| <i>Harry Potter Books 1-7</i> (For serious Harry Potter fans only) ¹ | J. K. Rowling | For the "Potter Purist." Read all seven books and prepare to enter the Wizarding World of Harry Potter Summer Reading Challenge. This session will engage your knowledge of all things Harry: Quidditch and muggles, butterbeer and treacle tarts, Hogsmeade and Diagon Alley and everything from the <i>Sorcerer's Stone</i> to the <i>Deathly Hallows</i> . |
| <i>The Help</i> | Kathryn Stockett | Set in Stockett's native Jackson, MS, in the early 1960s, this first novel adopts the complicated theme of blacks and whites living in a segregated South. A century after the Emancipation Proclamation, black maids raised white children and ran households but were paid poorly, often had to use separate toilets from the family, and watched the children they cared for commit bigotry. |
| <i>Hot Zone: A Terrifying True Story</i> | Richard Preston | A highly infectious, deadly virus from the central African rain forest suddenly appears in the suburbs of Washington, D.C. There is no cure. In a few days 90 percent of its victims are dead. A secret military SWAT team of soldiers and scientists is mobilized to stop the outbreak of this exotic "hot" virus. |
| <i>The Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet</i> | Jamie Ford | This debut novel tells a heartwarming story of fathers and sons, first loves, fate, and the resilient human heart. Set in the ethnic neighborhoods of Seattle during World War II and Japanese American internment camps of the era, the times and places are brought to life. |
| <i>I am Nujood, Age 10 and Divorced</i> (Grades 11 and 12) | Nujood Ali | Chosen by Glamour magazine as a Woman of the Year in 2008, Nujood of Yemen has become an international hero for her astonishingly brave resistance to child marriage. Sold off by her impoverished family at the age of 10, continually raped by her husband before she even reached puberty, Nujood found the courage to run away, and with the help of an activist lawyer, sympathetic judges, and the international press, she divorced her husband and returned home. |

¹ Students choosing to read the *Harry Potter* series do not need to select a second summer reading option

Byram Hills High School
Summer Reading List
2010

| Title | Author(s) | Blurb (descriptions from Amazon, Google Books, Books in Print, Wikipedia, Baker & Taylor) |
|---|----------------|--|
| <i>Life of Pi</i> | Yann Martel | The precocious son of a zookeeper, 16-year-old Pi Patel is raised in Pondicherry, India, where he tries on various faiths for size, attracting "religions the way a dog attracts fleas." Planning a move to Canada, his father packs up the family and their menagerie and they hitch a ride on an enormous freighter. After a harrowing shipwreck, Pi finds himself adrift in the Pacific Ocean, trapped on a 26-foot lifeboat with a wounded zebra, a spotted hyena, a seasick orangutan, and a 450-pound Bengal tiger named Richard Parker. |
| <i>Little Bee</i> (Grades 11 and 12) | Chris Cleave | What happens on the beach is brutal, and that it braids the fates of a 16-year-old Nigerian orphan (who calls herself Little Bee) and a well-off British couple--journalists trying to repair their strained marriage with a free holiday--who should have stayed behind their resort's walls. The tide of that event carries Little Bee back to their world, which she claims she couldn't explain to the girls from her village because they'd have no context for its abundance and calm. |
| <i>The Little Giant of Aberdeen County</i> | Tiffany Baker | Truly Plaice, having been blamed for her mother's death in childbirth and orphaned and separated from her sister when her father died when she was twelve, deals with constant curiosity over her large size and surprises the rural community when she grows emotionally and physically beyond their expectations in adulthood. |
| <i>The Lost City of Z: A Tale of Deadly Obsession in the Amazon</i> | David Grann | In 1925, renowned British explorer Col. Percy Harrison Fawcett embarked on a much publicized search to find the city of Z, site of an ancient Amazonian civilization that may or may not have existed. Fawcett, along with his grown son Jack, never returned, but that didn't stop countless others, including actors, college professors and well-funded explorers from venturing into the jungle to find Fawcett or the city. Among the wannabe explorers is Grann, a staff writer for the New Yorker, who has bad eyes and a worse sense of direction. He became interested in Fawcett while researching another story, eventually venturing into the Amazon to satisfy his all-consuming curiosity about the explorer and his fatal mission. Largely about Fawcett, the book examines the stranglehold of passion as Grann's vigorous research mirrors Fawcett's obsession with uncovering the mysteries of the jungle. By interweaving the great story of Fawcett with his own investigative escapades in South America and Britain, Grann provides an in-depth, captivating character study that has the relentless energy of a classic adventure tale. |
| <i>Matterhorn</i> (Grades 11 and 12) | Karl Marlantes | Marlantes's epic debut is a dense, vivid narrative spanning many months in the lives of American troops in Vietnam as they trudge across enemy lines, encountering danger from opposing forces as well as on their home turf. Marine lieutenant and platoon commander Waino Mellas is braving a 13-month tour in Quang-Tri province, where he is assigned to a fire-support base and befriends Hawke, older at 22; both learn about life, loss, and the horrors of war. |

Byram Hills High School
Summer Reading List
2010

| Title | Author(s) | Blurb (descriptions from Amazon, Google Books, Books in Print, Wikipedia, Baker & Taylor) |
|--|--------------------------------|--|
| <i>Maus: A Survivor's Tale</i> | Art Spiegelman | My father bleeds history -- And here my troubles began. Memoir about Vladek Spiegelman, a Jewish survivor of Hitler's Europe, and about his son, a cartoonist who tries to come to terms with his father, his story, and with history itself. |
| <i>Moment of Glory: The Year Underdogs Ruled Golf</i> | John Feinstein | In 2003, after winning six of the twelve majors from 2000 to 2002, Tiger Woods struggled with his swing, leaving him lagging behind the field at both the U.S. Open and the PGA Championship. With Woods out of the picture, the stage was set for a newcomer to claim the top position. Nobody expected that four virtually unknown players would rise to become first-time champions. |
| <i>The Most Beautiful Book in the World</i> (Grades 11 and 12) | Eric Emmanuel-Schmitt | Here are eight contemporary fables, populated by a cast of extravagant and affecting characters, about people in search of happiness. Behind each story lies a simple, if elusive, truth: happiness is often right in front of our eyes, though we may frequently be blind to it. |
| Novels featured in ABC's "Lost"²: <i>Watership Down</i> & <i>The Turn of the Screw</i> | Richard Adams & Henry James | Richard Adams' <i>Watership Down</i> is an allegorical tale of survival about a band of wild rabbits who leave their ancestral home to build a more humane society chronicles their adventures as they search for a safe place to establish a new warren where they can live in peace. <i>The Turn of the Screw</i> (1898) by Henry James is a classic ambiguous work of psychological and supernatural suspense. The story is open to interpretation and could be viewed as either a true ghost tale or a neurotic hallucination of an unreliable narrator, a mentally unstable governess placed in charge of two remarkable children. |
| <i>Open: An Autobiography</i> | Andre Agassi | Tennis player Andre Agassi reflects on his personal and professional life, discussing his childhood, family, training, media attention, matches, challenges, successes, struggle with depression, and more. |
| <i>Overachievers: The Secret Lives of Driven Kids</i> | Alexandra Robbins | Explains how high schools have become a stressful environment where students are defined not by their character or hunger for knowledge, but by often arbitrary scores and statistics, and recounts the real-life experiences of a group of teens struggling to fit in and be the best. |
| <i>Rising Tide</i> | Jeff Shaara | A comprehensive historical novel that covers World War II from Hitler's control of Western Europe to the conquest of Italy and the Normandy invasion. |

² Students choosing the novels featured in "Lost" do not need to select a second summer reading option

Byram Hills High School
Summer Reading List
2010

| Title | Author(s) | Blurb (descriptions from Amazon, Google Books, Books in Print, Wikipedia, Baker & Taylor) |
|---|--------------------|--|
| <i>The Road</i> | Cormac McCarthy | In a novel set in an indefinite, futuristic, post-apocalyptic world, a father and his young son make their way through the ruins of a devastated American landscape, struggling to survive and preserve the last remnants of their own humanity. |
| <i>The Romanov Prophecy</i> | Steve Berry | Miles Lord, a workaholic African-American lawyer from Atlanta, is in Moscow to help Stefan Baklanov, the Romanov claimant his high-powered firm is backing. Since the new tsar will reign as an autocrat like his ancestors, both big rubles and big bucks are at stake—not to mention access to nuclear weapons. Lord soon discerns that Baklanov is corrupt, a tool of the mafiya. While digging through old files on the Russian Revolution, Lord comes to believe Baklanov is the "raven" Rasputin predicted would help save the royal house in 1916. Teaming with a beautiful acrobat, Akilina Petrov of the Moscow Circus, Lord attempts to discover whether any children of Nicholas II escaped Lenin's executioners. |
| <i>Sarah's Key</i> | Tatiana de Rosnay | Paris, July 1942: Sarah, a ten year-old girl, is brutally arrested with her family by the French police in the Vel' d'Hiv' roundup, but not before she locks her younger brother in a cupboard in the family's apartment, thinking that she will be back within a few hours. |
| <i>Shutter Island</i> (Grades 11 and 12) | Dennis Lehane | U.S. Marshal Teddy Daniels and his partner, Chuck Aule, come to Shutter Island's Ashecliffe Hospital in search of an escaped mental patient, but unveil a nightmare world of CIA drug trials and repressive mind control. |
| <i>Sold</i> (Grades 11 and 12) | Patricia McCormick | Thirteen-year-old Lakshmi leaves her poor mountain home in Nepal thinking that she is to work in the city as a maid only to find that she has been sold into the sex slave trade in India and that there is no hope of escape. |
| <i>Stones into Schools</i> | Greg Mortenson | Greg Mortenson describes his efforts to promote peace throughout the world, and details how he was able to establish over 130 schools--mostly for girls--in remote regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan with the backing of the Central Asia Institute--a nonprofit organization. |
| <i>Straw: Finding my Way</i> | Darryl Strawberry | Former baseball slugger Darryl Strawberry, whose achievements on the field were often overshadowed by his struggles off the field, recounts the highs, the lows, and the lessons of hope and survival he learned along the way. |

Byram Hills High School
Summer Reading List
2010

| Title | Author(s) | Blurb (descriptions from Amazon, Google Books, Books in Print, Wikipedia, Baker & Taylor) |
|------------------------------|------------------|---|
| <i>What the Dog Saw</i> | Malcolm Gladwell | Collects the author's best "New Yorker" pieces, including essays on such topics as why there are so many kinds of mustard but only one type of ketchup, a surprising assessment of what makes a safer car, and an examination of a machine built to predict hit movies. |
| <i>What Would Google Do?</i> | Jeff Jarvis | An indispensable manual for survival and success, this guide asks the most important question today's leaders need to ask themselves: What would Google do? The result is an astonishing, mind-opening book that can change the way readers ask questions and solve problems. |