2016 School-Wide Summer Reading Program Title List

**Biography**

**Black Dog of Fate: A Memoir** by Peter Balakian

Peter Balakian writes with the precision of a poet and the lyricism of a privileged suburban child in 1950s & 60s New Jersey. He is shadowed by his relatives’ carefully guarded memories of past trauma: the brutal Turkish extermination in 1915 of more than a million Armenians, including most of his maternal grandmother's family. Balakian seamlessly interweaves personal and historical material to depict one young man's reclamation of his heritage and to scathingly indict the political forces that conspired to sweep under the rug the 20th century's first genocide.

**Miles: The Autobiography** by Miles Davis

Universally acclaimed as a musical genius, Miles Davis was one of the most important and influential musicians in the world. Here, Miles speaks out about his extraordinary life. In this book, he holds nothing back. He speaks frankly and openly about his drug problem and how he overcame it. He condemns the racism he encountered in the music business and in American society generally. And he discusses the women in his life. But above all, Miles talks about music and musicians, including the legends he has played with over the years: Bird, Dizzy, Monk, Trane, Mingus, and many others.

**No Easy Day** by Mark Owen

Mark Owen is a pseudonym for Matt Bissonnette, a Navy SEAL who took part in the 2011 raid on a compound in Pakistan that resulted in the death of Osama bin Laden. Owen was already a SEAL at the time of the 9/11 attacks; the book begins shortly thereafter, as he is qualifying for the U.S. Naval Special Warfare Development Group (otherwise known as the famed SEAL Team Six), and follows him through various missions, culminating with a detailed account of the planning and execution of the assault on bin Laden's compound. *No Easy Day* doesn't merely tell war stories; it also explores the culture of war and what it means to be a soldier.

**The Unforgiving Minute: a soldier’s education** by Ret. Captain Craig Mullaney

Young Captain Mullaney’s admirable, literate autobiography, that of a veteran of combat in Afghanistan, adds much to knowledge of the modern army and makes a valuable contribution to the ongoing debate over what a “warrior” is these days. Mullaney wryly recounts his years at West Point and as a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford, then writes eloquently of infantry combat and the persistent burden of guilt for not bringing all his men home even as he makes his account a tribute to his fellow warriors. He concludes with sidelights on his teaching post at the U.S. Naval Academy and the moving story of his younger brother’s graduation from West Point and subsequent passage into the ranks of the warriors himself. Almost impossible to put down for anyone interested in the modern U.S. Army or in modern warfare in general.

**Yes, Chef: a Memoir** by Marcus Samuelsson

Even if he had not become one of the world’s most celebrated chefs, Samuelsson would be the stuff of legend. Born into poverty in Ethiopia, the orphaned boy and his sister were adopted by a Swedish couple, who provided a nurturing home. Working side-by-side with his grandmother, he learned the best of Swedish cuisine. A stint in cooking school gave him entrée to the continent’s best kitchens and the discipline of French technique. Shortly after his arrival in New York, critics recognized his genius, and Swedish cooking became all the rage in Manhattan. Returning to his Ethiopian roots, he discovered that his father was still alive and that he had a family in Africa. He then went on to popularize African cuisine in America with the same passion he had devoted to Swedish food, and he now holds sway at a gastronomic temple in Harlem devoted to the myriad food traditions of Africa.
Fiction

The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho

An enchanting novel that has inspired a devoted following around the world. This story, dazzling in its powerful simplicity and inspiring wisdom, is about an Andalusian shepherd boy named Santiago who 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 points 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 treasure found within. Lush, evocative, and deeply humane, the story of Santiago is an eternal testament to the transformation power of our dreams and the importance of listening to our hearts.

The Cardinal of the Kremlin by Tom Clancy

Clancy uses nuclear strategies to probe the ambiguities of fighting the good fight-the Americans vs. the Soviets. By the time familiar hero Jack Ryan steps in to investigate mysterious structures on the Soviet-Afghan border, the Soviets have struck again by zapping a satellite with a free electron laser. The title's cardinal, an elite, well-placed source in the Kremlin, leaks details of this secret activity to the United States. In the backdrop of technological bravura, spiced by artful espionage and all-too-human mistakes, intelligence is transferred back and forth and there are attacks and counterattacks. Here is author Tom Clancy's heart-stopping masterpiece -- a riveting novel about one of the most intriguing issues of our time.

The Cuckoo's Calling by Robert Galbraith (aka J.K. Rowling)

After losing his leg to a land mine in Afghanistan, Cormoran Strike is barely scraping by as a private investigator. Strike is down to one client, and creditors are calling. He has also just broken up with his longtime girlfriend and is living in his office. Then John Bristow walks through his door with an amazing story: His sister, the legendary supermodel Lula Landry, known to her friends as the Cuckoo, famously fell to her death a few months earlier. The police ruled it a suicide, but John refuses to believe that. The case plunges Strike into the world of multimillionaire beauties, rock-star boyfriends, and desperate designers, and it introduces him to every variety of pleasure, enticement, seduction, and delusion known to man. You may think you know detectives, but you've never met one quite like Strike.

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time, by Mark Haddon

Christopher Boone, the autistic 15-year-old narrator of this revelatory novel, relaxes by groaning and doing math problems in his head, eats red-but not yellow or brown-foods and screams when he is touched. Strange as he may seem, other people are far more of a conundrum to him, for he lacks the intuitive "theory of mind" by which most of us sense what's going on in other people's heads. When his neighbor's poodle is killed and Christopher is falsely accused of the crime, he decides that he will take a page from Sherlock Holmes and track down the killer. As the mystery leads him to the secrets of his parents' broken marriage and then into an odyssey to find his place in the world, he must fall back on deductive logic to navigate the emotional complexities of a social world that remains a closed book to him. Though Christopher insists, "This will not be a funny book. I cannot tell jokes because I do not understand them," the novel brims with touching, ironic humor. The result is an eye-opening work in a unique and compelling literary voice.

The Graveyard Book by Neil Gaiman

While a highly motivated killer murders his family, a baby, ignorant of the horrific goings-on but bent on independence, pulls himself out of his crib and toddles out of the house and into the night. This is most unfortunate for the killer, since the baby was his prime target. Finding his way through the barred fence of an ancient graveyard, the baby is discovered by Mr. and Mrs. Owens, a stable and caring couple with no children of their own and who just happen to be dead. After much debate with the graveyard's rather opinionated denizens, it is decided that the Owenses will take in the child. Under their care and the sponsorship of the mysterious Silas, the baby is named Nobody and raised among the dead to protect him from the killer, who relentlessly pursues him. This is an utterly captivating tale that is cleverly told through an entertaining cast of ghostly characters.
**iBoy** by Kevin Brooks

South London teen Tom Harvey suffers a bizarre but compelling accident: when someone throws an iPhone at him from a 30-story public housing tower, his skull is split, and small pieces of the communications device cannot safely be retrieved during brain surgery. While recovering, Tom learns that his friend Lucy was brutally raped during the same incident. He also discovers that the bits of embedded iPhone have given him the power to search the web, listen to phone calls, and manipulate messages sent by cell, all through his thought processes. Motivated by the need to punish those who hurt Lucy, Tom sets out to identify and take revenge on local gang members. The ethical issues Tom encounters during his crusade will resonate with readers of any social class, and this novel should lead to many a discussion about the unsteady fault line between good and evil.

**Monster** by Walter Dean Myers

On trial for felony murder, 16-year-old Steve Harmon is accused of acting as lookout for a robbery that left a victim dead; if convicted, Steve could serve 25 years to life. Although it is clear that Steve did participate in the robbery, his level of involvement is questionable, leaving protagonist and reader to grapple with the question of his guilt. An amateur filmmaker, Steve tells his story in a combination of film script and journal. The "handwritten" font of the journal entries effectively uses boldface and different sizes of type to emphasize particular passages. The film script contains minimal jargon, explaining camera angles when each term first appears. Myers' son Christopher provides the black-and-white photos, often cropped and digitally altered, that complement the text. Script and journal together create a fascinating portrait of a terrified young man wrestling with his conscience.

**Red Kayak** by Priscilla Cummings

In this satisfying crime and coming-of-age drama, a toddler drowns in a kayak accident after friends of teenage Brady, the victim’s neighbor, vent some anger against the child’s dad by drilling holes in the bottom of his craft. It was a mean-spirited prank--but no one was supposed to die. What happens now? Revealing the terrible secret would implicate Brady’s friends in the drowning, and it clouds his whole world with guilt and fear. Cummings works plot and characterizations skillfully, building suspense as the evidence unfolds and as Brady wrestles with his decision and tries to come to terms with his own responsibility. Brady’s eastern-Maryland surroundings and heritage (his father, a waterman, struggles to make a living from crabbing) are also vividly evoked. Brady’s ultimate decision is both anguished and well-reasoned, making for a realistic conclusion.

**The River** by Gary Paulsen

"We want you to do it again." These words, spoken to Brian Robeson, will change his life. Two years earlier, Brian was stranded alone in the wilderness for 54 days with nothing but a small hatchet. Yet he survived. Now the government wants him to go back into the wilderness so that astronauts and the military can learn the survival techniques that kept Brian alive. Soon the project backfires, though, leaving Brian with a wounded partner and a long river to navigate. His only hope is to build a raft and try to transport the injured man a hundred miles downstream to a trading post--if the map he has is accurate.

**Room** by Emma Donoghue

To five-year-old-Jack, Room is the world. It's where he was born, it's where he and his Ma eat and sleep and play and learn. At night, his Ma shuts him safely in the wardrobe, where he is meant to be asleep when Old Nick visits. Room is home to Jack, but to Ma it's the prison where she has been held for seven years. Through her fierce love for her son, she has created a life for him in this eleven-by-eleven-foot space. But with Jack's curiosity building alongside her own desperation, she knows that Room cannot contain either much longer. Room is a tale at once shocking, riveting, exhilarating--a story of unconquerable love in harrowing circumstances, and of the diamond-hard bond between a mother and her child.
The Strain by Guillermo Del Toro and Chuck Hogan

A modern-day vampire trilogy, this story begins onboard a grounded plane that has just landed at New York's JFK airport. Police and emergency medical crews are called to investigate the possible outbreak of a mysterious disease, which has killed all but four of the plane's passengers. Unknowingly, something more ominous is responsible for the carnage, which now threatens the city and soon the entire country. Unlike the sexy bloodsuckers of paranormal romances and the cuddly vampires of teen fiction, these undead creatures are slick, dark, and frightening.

Fiction -- Science Fiction/Fantasy

Balancer (The Final Deity Series) by Patrick Wong

When teenagers Nicole and Amy save a child from a freak wildfire, they unwittingly trigger a bizarre sequence of events. In the following days, Nicole finds herself caught up in more extraordinary happenings, until she is forced to confront the startling truth about herself: She has the power to give life or take life from every living thing around her. As Nicole tests the extent of her powers, her activities attract the attention of mysterious agents who believe the girls are part of a larger terrorist plot. Now on a trail into the unknown, Nicole and Amy will be forced to question just what is real -- and who they can trust.

Out of a Silent Planet by C. S. Lewis

The first book in C. S. Lewis's acclaimed Space Trilogy, Out of the Silent Planet begins the adventures of the remarkable Dr. Ransom. Here, that estimable man is abducted by a megalomaniacal physicist and his accomplice and taken via spaceship to the red planet of Malacandra. The two men are in need of a human sacrifice, and Dr. Ransom would seem to fit the bill. Once on the planet, however, Ransom eludes his captors, risking his life and his chances of returning to Earth, becoming a stranger in a land that is enchanting in its difference from Earth and instructive in its similarity. First published in 1943, Out of the Silent Planet remains a mysterious and suspenseful tour de force.

The Outcasts (The Brotherband Chronicles series) by John Flanagan.

They are outcasts. Hal, Stig, and the others - they are the boys the others want no part of. Skandians, as any reader of Ranger's Apprentice could tell you, are known for their size and strength. Not these boys. Yet that doesn't mean they don't have skills. And courage - which they will need every ounce of to do battle at sea against the other bands, the Wolves and the Sharks, in the ultimate race. The icy waters make for a treacherous playing field, especially when not everyone thinks of it as playing.

Symbiont (Parasitology Series) by Mira Grant

The second book in Grant’s terrifying Parasitology series – “The Enemy is Inside Us”. The SymboGen designed tapeworms were created to relieve humanity of disease and sickness. But the implants in the majority of the world's population began attacking their hosts turning them into a ravenous horde. Now those who do not appear to be afflicted are being gathered for quarantine as panic spreads, but Sal and her companions must discover how the tapeworms are taking over their hosts, what their eventual goal is, and how they can be stopped.

Prodigy (Legend Series) by Marie Lu

In book two of the highly-acclaimed series, June and Day arrive in Vegas just as the unthinkable happens: the Elector Primo dies, and his son Anden takes his place. With the Republic edging closer to chaos, the two join a group of Patriot rebels eager to help Day rescue his brother and offer passage to the Colonies. They have only one request--June and Day must assassinate the new Elector. It's their chance to change the nation, to give voice to a people silenced for too long. But as June realizes this Elector is nothing like his father, she's haunted by the choice ahead. What if Anden is a new beginning? What if revolution must be more than loss and vengeance, anger and blood--what if the Patriots are wrong?
Ready Player One by Ernest Cline

In the year 2044, reality is an ugly place. The only time teenage Wade Watts really feels alive is when he's jacked into the virtual utopia known as the OASIS. Wade's devoted his life to studying the puzzles hidden within this world's digital confines—puzzles that are based on their creator's obsession with the pop culture of decades past and that promise massive power and fortune to whoever can unlock them. But when Wade stumbles upon the first clue, he finds himself beset by players willing to kill to take this ultimate prize. The race is on, and if Wade's going to survive, he'll have to win—and confront the real world he's always been so desperate to escape.

The Ruins of Gorlan (The Ranger’s Apprentice Series) by John Flanagan

Will hopes to become a knight; instead, he winds up as a Ranger's apprentice, joining the secretive corps that uses stealth, woodcraft, and courage to protect the kingdom. His aptitude and bravery gradually earn the respect of his gruff but good-hearted master. When the kingdom is attacked by evil magic forces, Will helps track down and defeat a couple of particularly nasty beasts. Soon Will learns that becoming a ranger is more difficult, dangerous, and worthwhile than he had imagined. He earns the respect of his elders and the friendship of a former foe, but all this is prelude to the great adventure that follows, when his skills wielding a knife and keeping a heightened awareness of his surroundings become vital to the survival of his mentor and the safety of the kingdom.

Starship Troopers by Robert Heinlein.

There’s a reason why this rousing war story won the Hugo Award, spawned movies and games and comic books, and has been reprinted in numerous editions: it’s darn good. This novel, set a couple of hundred years in the future, is narrated by Juan “Johnnie” Rico, who has the misfortune of signing up for military service just before war breaks out with the Bugs, an arachnid species from the planet Klendathu. But what appears to be a stroke of bad luck is actually the best thing that could have happened to Johnnie: the rigors of boot camp and the horrors of combat turn him into a soldier—and into a man. Heinlein packs the novel with futuristic—but entirely realistic—details about weaponry, command structure, and combat tactics. He also provides, through Johnnie’s first-person narration, a thoughtful and perceptive examination of the nature of war and of the people who voluntarily enter into it.

Classic Literature

Brideshead Revisited by Evelyn Waugh

A departure from Waugh's normally comic theater, this novel concerns the tale of Charles Ryder, a captain in the British Army in post-World War I England. Unlike his previous narrators, Ryder is an intelligent man, looking back on much of his life from his current post in Oxford. He strikes a special friendship with Lord Sebastian Flyte as the setting moves to the Brideshead estate and a baroque castle that recalls England's prior standing in the world. Ryder falls for Flyte's sister while families, politics and religions collide. What makes the book extraordinary is Waugh's sharp, vivid style and his use of dialect and minor characters. This is one of Waugh's finest accomplishments and a superb book.

The Great Divorce, by C.S. Lewis

C.S. Lewis’ The Great Divorce is a classic Christian allegorical tale about a bus ride from hell to heaven. An extraordinary meditation upon good and evil, grace and judgment, Lewis’s revolutionary idea in the The Great Divorce is that the gates of Hell are locked from the inside. Using his extraordinary descriptive powers, Lewis’ The Great Divorce will change the way we think about good and evil.
Graphic Novel

American Born Chinese by Gene Luen Yang

This graphic novel is a well-crafted work that aptly explores issues of self-image, cultural identity, transformation, and self-acceptance. In a series of three linked tales, the central characters are introduced: Jin Wang, a teen who meets with ridicule and social isolation when his family moves from San Francisco's Chinatown to an exclusively white suburb; Danny, a popular blond, blue-eyed high school jock whose social status is jeopardized when his goofy, embarrassing Chinese cousin, Chin-Kee, enrolls at his high school; and the Monkey King who, unsatisfied with his current sovereign, desperately longs to be elevated to the status of a god. Their stories converge into a satisfying coming-of-age novel that aptly blends traditional Chinese fables and legends with bathroom humor, action figures, and playground politics. The book explores the impact of the American dream on those outside the dominant culture in a finely wrought story that is an effective combination of humor and drama.

Persepolis by Marjane Satrapi

Marji tells of her life in Iran from the age of 10, when the Islamic revolution of 1979 reintroduced a religious state, through the age of 14 when the Iran-Iraq war forced her parents to send her to Europe for safety. This story, told in graphic format with simple, but expressive, black-and-white illustrations, combines the normal rebelliousness of an intelligent adolescent with the horrors of war and totalitarianism. Marji's parents, especially her freethinking mother, modeled a strong belief in freedom and equality, while her French education gave her a strong faith in God. Her Marxist-inclined family initially favored the overthrow of the Shah, but soon realized that the new regime was more restrictive and unfair than the last. The girl's independence, which made her parents both proud and fearful, caused them to send her to Austria. This is a graphic novel of immense power and importance for Westerners of all ages.

Non Fiction

Adrift: Seventy-Six Days Lost at Sea by Steven Callahan

Callahan, a marine architect, lost his boat in a storm off the Canary Islands while engaged in a singlehanded race across the Atlantic in 1981. Luckily, he carried far more than the basic emergency equipment required, e.g., a six-person raft. Before sinking he was able to recover his emergency equipment bag and his life raft. Callahan admits to having previously read survival accounts and even has one manual with him in his raft. Through his own ingenuity he learned how to spear fish, fix his solar still, and even repair his holed raft. This is a real human drama that delves deeply into a man's survival instincts.

Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, and Madness at the Fair that Changed America by Erik Larson

Larson imbues the incredible events surrounding the 1893 Chicago World's Fair with such drama that readers may find themselves checking the book's categorization to be sure that this book is not, in fact, a highly imaginative novel. Larson tells the stories of two men: Daniel H. Burnham, the architect responsible for the fair's construction, and H.H. Holmes, a serial killer masquerading as a charming doctor. Burnham's challenge was immense. In a short period of time, he was forced to overcome the death of his partner and numerous other obstacles to construct the famous "White City" around which the fair was built. His efforts to complete the project, and the fair's incredible success, are skillfully related along with entertaining appearances by such notables as Buffalo Bill Cody, Susan B. Anthony, and Thomas Edison. The activities of the sinister Dr. Holmes, who is believed to be responsible for scores of murders around the time of the fair, are equally remarkable. He devised and erected the World's Fair Hotel, complete with crematorium and gas chamber, near the fairgrounds and used the event as well as his own charismatic personality to lure victims. Combining the stories of an architect and a killer in one book, mostly in alternating chapters, seems like an odd choice but it works.
Into Thin Air by Jon Krakauer

A bank of clouds was assembling on the not-so-distant horizon, but journalist-mountaineer Krakauer, standing on the summit of Mt. Everest, saw nothing that "suggested that a murderous storm was bearing down." He was wrong. The storm, which claimed five lives and left countless more--including Krakauer's--in guilt-ridden disarray, provides the impetus for his epic account of the May 1996 disaster. Krakauer survived by luck, skill, and discipline. Here is the definitive tale of this headline-making tragedy.

The Italian-Americans: A History

In this richly researched, beautifully designed and illustrated volume, Laurino strips away stereotypes and nostalgia to tell the complicated, centuries-long story of the true Italian-American experience. Looking beyond the familiar Little Italys and stereotypes fostered by The Godfather and The Sopranos, Laurino reveals surprising, fascinating lives: Italian-Americans working on sugar-cane plantations in Louisiana to those who were lynched in New Orleans; the banker who helped rebuild San Francisco after the great earthquake; families interned as “enemy aliens” in World War II. From anarchist radicals to “Rosie the Riveter” to Nancy Pelosi, Andrew Cuomo, and Bill de Blasio; from traditional artisans to rebel songsters like Frank Sinatra, Dion, Madonna, and Lady Gaga, this book is both exploration and celebration of the rich legacy of Italian-American life.

Outliers: The Story of Success by Malcolm Gladwell

Best-selling author Gladwell identifies the qualities of successful people, posing theories about the cultural, family, and idiosyncratic factors that shape high achievers, in a resource that covers such topics as the secrets of software billionaires, why certain cultures are associated with better academic performance, and why the Beatles earned their fame. Stories that are usually told about extremely successful people are stories that focus on intelligence and ambition. Gladwell argues that the true story of success is very different, and that if we want to understand how some people thrive, we should spend more time looking around them—at such things as their family, their birthplace, or even their birth date. And in revealing that hidden logic, Gladwell presents a fascinating and provocative blueprint for making the most of human potential.

The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History, by Elizabeth Kolbert.

Evidence of a human-made mass extinction seems everywhere around us: long lists of endangered species, high concentrations of carbon dioxide in the air and oceans, and biodiversity losses from deforestation of the tropics. New Yorker staff writer Kolbert traveled all over the world to interview marine biologists, atmospheric scientists, geologists, forest ecologists, and paleontologists about their take on the Sixth Extinction (five other major extinctions have occurred in Earth's history). Tracing how extinction itself evolved as a scientific concept, Kolbert discusses the great animal extinctions of the past as well as the imminent loss of present-day animals such as the Sumatran rhino and the little brown bat.

This Is Your Brain on Music: The Science of a Human Obsession by Daniel J. Levitin

In this groundbreaking union of art and science, rocker-turned-neuroscientist Levitin explores the connection between music - its performance, its composition, how we listen to it, why we enjoy it - and the human brain. Taking on prominent thinkers who argue that music is nothing more than an evolutionary accident, Levitin poses that music is fundamental to our species, perhaps even more so than language. A Los Angeles Times Book Award finalist, this book is an unprecedented, eye-opening investigation into an obsession at the heart of human nature.
What If?: Serious Scientific Answers to Absurd Hypothetical Questions by Randall Munroe.

Millions of people visit xkcd.com each week to read Randall Munroe's iconic webcomic. His stick-figure drawings about science, technology, language, and love have a large and passionate following. Fans of xkcd ask Munroe a lot of strange questions. What if you tried to hit a baseball pitched at 90 percent the speed of light? How fast can you hit a speed bump while driving and live? If there was a robot apocalypse, how long would humanity last? In pursuit of answers, Munroe runs computer simulations, pores over stacks of declassified military research memos, solves differential equations, and consults with nuclear reactor operators. His responses are masterpieces of clarity and hilarity, complemented by signature xkcd comics. They often predict the complete annihilation of humankind, or at least a really big explosion.

Non Fiction – Military/History

The Finest Hours: The True Story of the U.S. Coast Guard's Most Daring Sea Rescue by Michael Tougias, and Casey Sherman

It’s the winter of 1952 and a ferocious Nor’easter is pounding New England with howling winds and seventy-foot seas. Two oil tankers get caught in the violent storm off Cape Cod, its fury splitting the massive ships in two. Back on shore are four young Coast Guardsmen who are given a suicide mission. They must save the lives of the seamen left stranded in the killer storm, and they have to do it in a tiny lifeboat. The crew is led by Bernie Webber, who has to rely on prayer and the courage of his three crewmembers to pull off the impossible. As Webber and his crew sail into the teeth of the storm, each man comes to the realization that he may not come back alive. They’ve lost all navigation and have no idea where the stranded seaman are, and have no idea how to get back home. Whether by sheer luck or divine intervention, the crew stumbles upon the wounded ship in the darkness. More than thirty men appear at the railings of the SS Pendleton, all hoping to be saved. Once again, Webber and his crew face a daunting challenge. How can they rescue all these men with their tiny lifeboat?

From Baghdad with Love: A Marine, the War, and a Dog Named Lava by Jay Kopelman

When Marines enter an abandoned house in Fallujah, Iraq, and hear a suspicious noise, they clench their weapons, edge around the corner, and prepare to open fire. What they find during the U.S.–led attack on the “most dangerous city on Earth” in late 2004, however, is not an insurgent but a puppy left behind when most of the city’s residents fled. Despite military law forbidding pets, the Marines de-flea the pup with kerosene, de-worm him with chewing tobacco, and fill him up on Meals Ready to Eat. Thus begins the dramatic rescue of a dog named Lava—and Lava’s rescue of at least one Marine, Lieutenant Colonel Jay Kopelman, from the emotional ravages of war. From hardened soldiers to wartime journalists to endangered Iraqi citizens, this book tells the unforgettable true story of an unlikely band of heroes who learn unexpected lessons about life, death, and war from a mangy little flea-ridden refugee.

No Better Friend: One Man, One Dog, and Their Extraordinary Story of Courage and Survival in WWII by Robert Weintraub

Flight technician Frank Williams and Judy, a purebred pointer, met in the most unlikely of places: a World War II internment camp in the Pacific. Judy was a fiercely loyal dog, with a keen sense for who was friend and who was foe, and the pair's relationship deepened throughout their captivity. When the prisoners suffered beatings, Judy would repeatedly risk her life to intervene. She survived bombings and other near-death experiences and became a beacon not only for Frank but for all the men, who saw in her survival a flicker of hope for their own. Their story--of an unbreakable bond forged in the worst circumstances--is one of the great undiscovered sagas of World War II.
Non Fiction – Motivational

The Energy Bus by Jon Gordon

*The Energy Bus*, an international best seller, takes readers on an enlightening and inspiring ride that reveals 10 secrets for approaching life and work with the kind of positive, forward thinking that leads to true accomplishment - at work and at home. Gordon infuses this engaging story with keen insights as he provides a powerful roadmap to overcome adversity and bring out the best in yourself and your team. When you get on *The Energy Bus* you’ll enjoy the ride of your life!

The Music Lesson: A Spiritual Search for Growth Through Music by Victor Wooten

Grammy-winning musical icon and legendary bassist Wooten tells the story of a struggling young musician who wanted music to be his life, and who wanted his life to be great. Then, from nowhere it seemed, a teacher arrived. Part musical genius, part philosopher, part eccentric wise man, the teacher would guide the young musician on a spiritual journey, and teach him that the gifts we get from music mirror those from life, and every movement, phrase, and chord has its own meaning...All you have to do is find the song inside.

Think Big by Ben Carson

In this follow-up to his best-selling Gifted Hands, Dr. Ben Carson prescribes his personal formula for success. And who could better advise than a man who has transformed himself from a ghetto kid into the most celebrated pediatric neurosurgeon in the world? With an acrostic, Dr. Carson spells out his philosophy of living: T-Talents/time: Recognize them as gifts. H -Hope for all good things and be honest. I -Insight from people and good books. N -Be nice to all people. K -Knowledge: Recognize it as the key to living. B -Books: Read them actively. I -In-depth learning skills: Develop them. G -God: Never get too big for Him. Think Big emphasizes how to evaluate and respond to problems in order to overcome them and make the most of your inner potential.

Non Fiction - Sports

The Boys in the Boat: Nine Americans and Their Epic Quest for Gold at the 1936 Berlin Olympics by Daniel James Brown

In this sweeping saga, Brown vividly relates how, in 1936, nine working-class rowers from the University of Washington captured gold at the Berlin Olympics. Mentored not just by their coach but by legendary boat-builder George Pocock, these athletes overcame the hopelessness common during the Great Depression by learning to trust themselves and one another, and by rowing with grace and power. The crew's camaraderie and unmatched precision surpassed expectations, shocking the sporting world. Brown faithfully conveys rowing's stoic persistence, passion, and pain. He captures how and why this team rowed in flawless harmony. The story's depth comes from the memories that rower Joe Rantz shared with Brown shortly before his death as well as from Brown's interviews with crewmates' friends and family and their archives. In a brief epilog, Brown comments on the rowers' post-Olympic accomplishments.

Every Day I Fight by Stuart Scott

Shortly before he passed away, on January 4, 2015, Stuart Scott completed work on this memoir. It was both a labor of love and a love letter to life itself. Not only did Stuart relate his personal story—his childhood in North Carolina, his supportive family, his athletic escapades, his on-the-job training as a fledgling sportscaster, his being hired and eventual triumphs at ESPN—he shared his intimate struggles to keep his story going. Struck by appendiceal cancer in 2007, Stuart battled this rare disease with an unimaginable tenacity and vigor. Countless surgeries, enervating chemotherapies, endless shuttling from home to hospital to office and back—Stuart continued defying fate, pushing himself through exercises and workout routines that kept him strong. He wanted to be there for his teenage daughters, Sydni and Taelor, not simply as their dad, but as an immutable example of determination and courage. *Every Day I Fight* is a saga of love, an inspiration to us all.
The Pine Tar Game: The Kansas City Royals, the New York Yankees, and Baseball’s Most Absurd and Entertaining Controversy by Filip Bondy

Former New York Daily News sportswriter Bondy explores the backstory, in-game details, and aftermath of a memorable 1983 baseball matchup between the mighty New York Yankees and the upstart Kansas City Royals. Bondy tells the story behind Yankees manager Billy Martin accusing Royals superstar slugger George Brett of cheating by applying too much of a grip-aiding sticky substance on a bat used to blast a game-winning home run. But this is much more than the story of just one incident in one game. Rather, it's the richly detailed and insightful history of two very different franchises on a collision course—the big-budget, long-successful Yankees, led by the notoriously demanding George Steinbrenner, and the penny-pinching but improving Royals, guided by Steinbrenner's polar opposite, the mild-mannered Ewing Kauffman. Bondy examines not only the decades coming up to the game but also the weeks following, when lawyers, judges, players, managers, and team owners sparred over the umpires' controversial handling of the incident.

Sneaker Wars: The Enemy Brothers Who Founded Adidas and Puma and the Family Feud That Forever Changed the Business of Sports by Barbara Smit

Sneaker Wars is the fascinating true story of the enemy brothers behind Adidas and Puma, two of the biggest global brands of athletic footwear. Adi and Rudi Dassler started their shoe business in their mother's laundry room and achieved almost instantaneous success. But by the end of World War II a vicious feud had torn the Dasslers apart, dividing their company and their family and launching them down separate, often contentious paths. Out of the fires of their animosity, two rival sneaker brands were born, brands that would revolutionize the world of professional sports, sparking astonishing behind-the-scenes deals, fabulous ad campaigns, and multimillion-dollar contracts for pro athletes, from Joe Namath to Muhammad Ali to David Beckham.