

Junior Academic Summer Reading Assignment

Students enrolled in 11 Academic English for the next school year must read **two** of the following four books. (all book descriptions are taken from Amazon.com)

A Dog's Purpose – W. Bruce Cameron

Heartwarming, insightful, and often laugh-out-loud funny, *A Dog's Purpose* is not only the emotional and hilarious story of a dog's many lives, but also a dog's-eye commentary on human relationships and the unbreakable bonds between man and man's best friend. This moving and beautifully crafted story teaches us that love never dies, that our true friends are always with us, and that every creature on earth is born with a purpose.

A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier – Ishmael Beah

What is war like through the eyes of a child soldier? How does one become a killer? How does one stop? Child soldiers have been profiled by journalists, and novelists have struggled to imagine their lives. But until now, there has not been a first-person account from someone who came through this hell and survived.

This is a rare and mesmerizing account, told with real literary force and heartbreaking honesty.

NOTE: this book contains some graphic descriptions of war and violence. There are also references to drug use as they were used to control the boy soldiers.

Their Eyes were Watching God – Zora Neale Hurston

One of the most important works of twentieth-century American literature, Zora Neale Hurston's beloved 1937 classic, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, is an enduring Southern love story

sparkling with wit, beauty, and heartfelt wisdom. Told in the captivating voice of a woman who refuses to live in sorrow, bitterness, fear, or foolish romantic dreams, it is the story of fair-skinned, fiercely independent Janie Crawford, and her evolving selfhood through three marriages and a life marked by poverty, trials, and purpose. A true literary wonder, Hurston's masterwork remains as relevant and affecting today as when it was first published -- perhaps the most widely read and highly regarded novel in the entire canon of African American literature.

Zeitoun – David Eggars

The true story of one family, caught between America's two biggest policy disasters: the war on terror and the response to Hurricane Katrina.

Abdulrahman and Kathy Zeitoun run a house-painting business in New Orleans. In August of 2005, as Hurricane Katrina approaches, Kathy evacuates with their four young children, leaving Zeitoun to watch over the business. In the days following the storm he travels the city by canoe, feeding abandoned animals and helping elderly neighbors. Then, on September 6th, police officers armed with M-16s arrest Zeitoun in his home. Told with eloquence and compassion, *Zeitoun* is a riveting account of one family's unthinkable struggle with forces beyond wind and water.

The Last Lecture – Randy Pausch with Jeffrey Zaslow

A lot of professors give talks titled "The Last Lecture." Professors are asked to consider their demise and to ruminate on what matters most to them. And while they speak, audiences can't help but mull the same question: What wisdom would we impart to the world if we knew it was our last chance? If we had to vanish tomorrow, what would we want as our legacy?

When Randy Pausch, a computer science professor at Carnegie Mellon, was asked to give such a lecture, he didn't have to imagine it as his last, since he had recently been diagnosed with terminal cancer. But the lecture he gave--"Really Achieving Your Childhood Dreams"--wasn't about dying. It was about the importance of overcoming obstacles, of enabling the dreams of others, of seizing every moment (because "time is all you have...and you may find one day that

you have less than you think"). It was a summation of everything Randy had come to believe. It was about living.

In this book, Randy Pausch has combined the humor, inspiration and intelligence that made his lecture such a phenomenon and given it an indelible form. It is a book that will be shared for generations to come.

"We cannot change the cards we are dealt, just how we play the hand." --Randy Pausch

In order to keep track and remember what you have read, you should take notes on the setting, the main characters, plot summary, and themes.

A test on the books will take place on the first Friday of school. The test will be a combination of true/false, matching, multiple choice, quotes, and essay. This evaluation will be your first grade for the first quarter.

Please check the website as some of the above titles may have reading guides.