



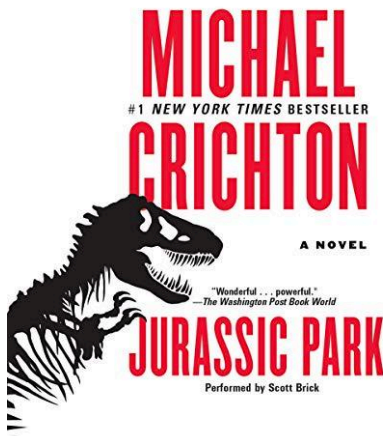
## St. Thomas Aquinas High School Summer Reading 2024

The goals of the Summer Reading Program at STA are to enhance the reading life of our students, expand the curriculum, and promote the belief that reading is one of life's great pleasures. To that end, the Summer Reading Program consists of two parts. One is required of all students, while the other is optional and open to any student who might enjoy reading some of our faculty and staff's favorite books, while earning extra credit in any class they will take this fall.

**Part I - The REQUIRED Book:** Each student is required to read ONE book designated by grade level. The books for each grade level have been chosen by one of the academic departments and will be discussed at the beginning of the school year in a given class. All 9th-grade students will read the same book for science class; all 10th-grade students will read the same book for theology; all 11th-grade students will read the same book for social studies; all 12th-grade students will read the same book for English.

**NOTE:** You will take a test on the required book during the first week of school next fall.

### Grade 9: *Jurassic Park* by Michael Crichton

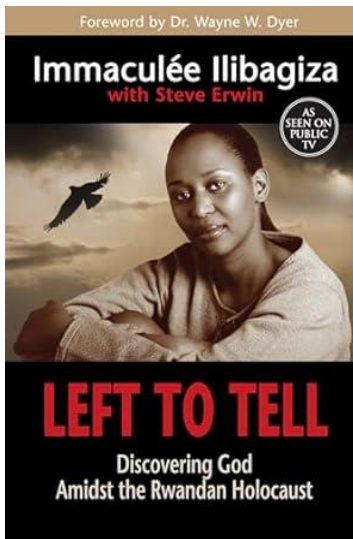


In 1990, Michael Crichton introduced the world to Dr. Hammond, an eccentric multimillionaire who builds a theme park with genetically reengineered dinosaurs. The book focuses on a wonderful mixture of science and fantasy, the borders of which are hard to discern. The infusion of chaos theory adds a great deal of scientific relevance and debate to the story.

Since 1990, a great deal has happened in the world of biotechnology and genetic engineering. Somatic cell nuclear transfer was used to create Dolly, the first cloned sheep in 1996. Subsequently, scores of other organisms have been cloned. The human genome has been mapped (completed in 2003). Other genomes continue to be mapped at a rapid pace thanks to technological advances in gene sequencing. There is now discussion about de-extinction projects where extinct organisms are brought back through cloning and genetic engineering. Genome editing with CRISPR is accelerating all aspects of genetic engineering. Is *Jurassic Park* becoming more of a reality than we thought possible?

Using *Jurassic Park* as a background, science teachers will engage students in studies dealing with systems and chaos theory, the reality of 21st-century genetics, and the moral and ethical questions raised by these technologies.

**Grade 10: *Left to Tell: Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust*  
by Immaculee Ilibagiza**



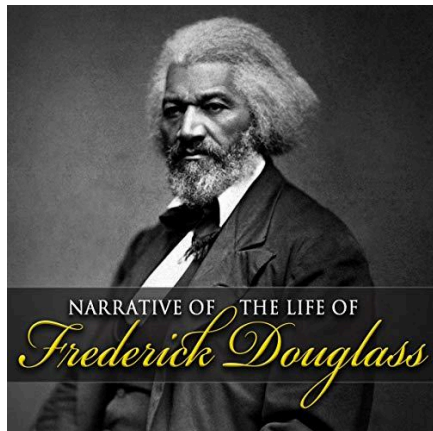
Immaculee Ilibagiza grew up in a country she loved, surrounded by a family she cherished. But in 1994 her idyllic world was ripped apart as Rwanda descended into a bloody genocide. Immaculee's family was brutally murdered during a killing spree that lasted three months and claimed the lives of nearly a million Rwandans.

Incredibly, Immaculee survived the slaughter. For 91 days, she and seven other women huddled silently together in the cramped bathroom of a local pastor while hundreds of machete-wielding killers hunted for them.

It was during those endless hours of unspeakable terror that Immaculee discovered the power of prayer, eventually shedding her fear of death and forging a profound and lasting relationship with God. She emerged from her bathroom hideout having discovered the meaning of truly unconditional love—a love so strong she was able to seek out and forgive her family's killers.

The triumphant story of this remarkable young woman's journey through the darkness of genocide will inspire anyone whose life has been touched by fear, suffering, and loss.

**Grade 11: *A Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*  
by Frederick Douglass**



"First appearing in 1845 *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, with its painfully vivid depiction of life in bondage, was both a bestseller in its day and one of the most powerful, authoritative texts lending support to the abolitionist movement. The author traces his life from an infant born into slavery and taken from his mother at birth, to a displaced child hungry for knowledge, to an abused and beaten laborer seeking freedom and a chance to marry the woman he loved. Offering bright, cameo glimpses into a world that should not be forgotten, Douglass chronicles both the cruel violence of a system that saw him as little more than livestock, and the brighter moments of success, of courageous support from friends and allies. Initially greeted by some with doubt that it could have been written by a black man and former slave, the book had a profound effect on American society, making the author something of a celebrity and his cause less an abstract ideal and more of an urgent human concern. Solemn, powerful and passionate *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* is more than an important historical document—it is a personal account of striving for human freedom in a world where the author was regarded as neither free nor human."

**Grade 12: *The Things They Carried*  
by Tim O'Brien**



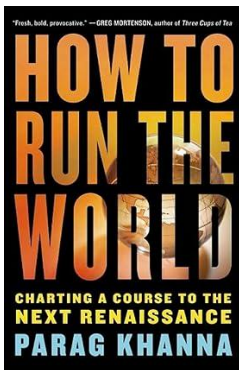
Based on his own experiences as a soldier in Vietnam, O'Brien writes of the life of a soldier – an ordinary American boy, a human being faced with the terrible truths of war. In doing so, he also writes about writing, claiming that works of fiction convey human truth more effectively than reality or memory. This is an amazing novel, one which is clearly a blend of the real experiences and straightforward voice of a soldier of the 1960s, with the imagination of a writer looking back and trying to understand his life. This is truly one of those books every American should read.

**PART II -- The OPTIONAL Books: Faculty and Staff Favorites**

The second component is optional. Any student may choose to read a book from the list of “Faculty and Staff Favorites.” In September, you will complete an assessment on the book(s) you read, to be given by the teacher who nominated the book. At that time, you will choose to have your score count as **extra credit in any subject you wish.** (For example, you might read Mr. Holtz’s book, but have it count for your English class.) The extra credit grade will allow you to earn up to 5 points or percentage points (based on the teacher’s grading system), which will be applied on an assessment for the first quarter. This has the potential of increasing the one assessment grade up half a letter grade.

**NOTE: \*\*Only THREE books may be used for extra credit, but you can read as many books as you wish!**

Mr. Bernal-López	<i>How to Run the World: Charting a Course to the Next Renaissance</i> by Parag Khanna	Nonfiction
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“Here is a stunning and provocative guide to the future of international relations—a system for managing global problems beyond the stalemates of business versus government, East versus West, rich versus poor, democracy versus authoritarianism, free markets versus state capitalism. Written by the most esteemed and innovative adventurer-scholar of his generation, Parag Khanna’s *How to Run the World* posits a chaotic modern era that resembles the Middle Ages, with Asian empires, Western militaries, Middle Eastern sheikhdoms, magnetic city-states, wealthy multinational corporations, elite clans, religious zealots, tribal hordes, and potent media seething in an ever more unpredictable and dangerous storm. But just as that initial ‘dark age’ ended with the Renaissance, Khanna believes that our time can become a great and enlightened age as well—only, though, if we harness our technology and connectedness to forge new networks among governments, businesses, and civic interest groups to tackle the crisis of today and avert those of tomorrow.”

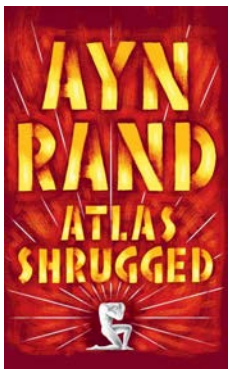
Mr. Bishop	<i>Gilead</i> by Marilynne Robinson	Fiction
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“Winner of the Pulitzer Prize (2005) and National Book Critics Circle Award, *Gilead* is a hymn of praise and lamentation to the God-haunted existence that Reverend Ames loves passionately, and from which he will soon part.

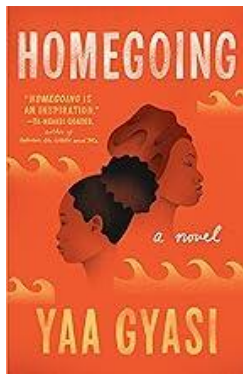
In 1956, toward the end of Reverend John Ames's life, he begins a letter to his young son, an account of himself and his forebears. Ames is the son of an Iowan preacher and the grandson of a minister who, as a young man in Maine, saw a vision of Christ bound in chains and came west to Kansas to fight for abolition: He "preached men into the Civil War," then, at age fifty, became a chaplain in the Union Army, losing his right eye in battle." - Amazon

Mr. Burnett	<i>Atlas Shrugged</i> by Ayn Rand	Dystopian Fiction
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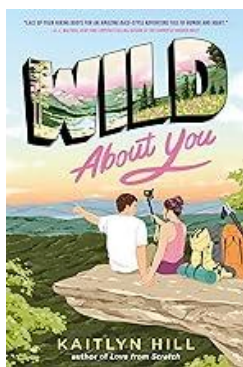
*Atlas Shrugged* by Ayn Rand is a philosophical novel that explores the themes of individualism, capitalism, and the power of human achievement. Set in a dystopian future where society is collapsing under government regulation and collectivism, the story follows the struggles of innovative industrialists, led by the enigmatic figure of John Galt, as they rebel against a system that stifles their creativity and productivity. Through its complex characters and intricate plot, Rand delivers a passionate defense of rational self-interest and the importance of pursuing one's own happiness and values, while critiquing the consequences of sacrificing individual freedom for the collective good.

Mr. Cunningham	<i>Homegoing</i> by Yaa Gyasi	Fiction
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From the Goodreads summary of *Homegoing*: Two half-sisters, Effia and Esi, are born into different villages in eighteenth-century Ghana. Effia is married off to an Englishman and lives in comfort in the palatial rooms of Cape Coast Castle. Unbeknownst to Effia, her sister, Esi, is imprisoned beneath her in the castle's dungeons, sold with thousands of others into the Gold Coast's booming slave trade, and shipped off to America, where her children and grandchildren will be raised in slavery. One thread of *Homegoing* follows Effia's descendants through centuries of warfare in Ghana, as the Fante and Asante nations wrestle with the slave trade and British colonization. The other thread follows Esi and her children into America. From the plantations of the South to the Civil War and the Great Migration, from the coal mines of Pratt City, Alabama, to the jazz clubs and dope houses of twentieth-century Harlem, right up through the present day, *Homegoing* makes history visceral, and captures, with singular and stunning immediacy, how the memory of captivity came to be inscribed in the soul of a nation.

Mr. Cunningham	<i>Wild About You</i> by Kaitlyn Hill	Young Adult Fiction
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YA Romance is not my go-to genre, but the author, Kaitlyn Hill, is a good friend and I love supporting her writing. Kaitlyn's third novel, *Wild About You*, is releasing at the end of May.

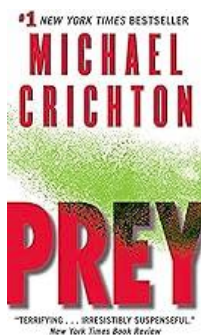
From the Barnes and Noble synopsis: Two total opposites. One race through the Great Outdoors. In this grumpy-sunshine teen romance from the author of *Love from Scratch* and *Not Here to Stay Friends*, the trail to true love doesn't always come with a map.

Natalie Hart has always been loud, unfiltered, and unapologetically herself. But then comes her freshman year of college, when she loses her merit scholarship and gains one pesky little anxiety diagnosis.

Hesitant to take out more student loans, Natalie decides to shoot her shot and applies to *Wild Adventures*, a popular outdoorsy reality show. Sure, Natalie prefers her twelve-step skincare routine to roughing it on the Appalachian Trail while competing in challenges against other college kids, but that scholarship prize money is calling her name. High risk, high reward, right?

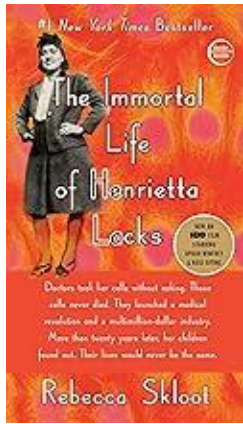
Enter Finn Markum, her randomly assigned, capital-O Outdoorsy teammate whose growl could rival a black bear. These partners have more friction than a pair of new hiking boots. Or is it flirtation? Turns out falling in love might be the wildest adventure of all...

Mr. Holtz	<i>Prey</i> by Michael Crichton	Fiction
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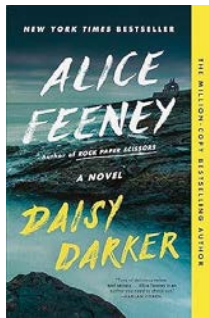
*Prey* tells the story of a mechanical plague and the desperate attempts of several scientists to destroy it. "A cloud of nanoparticles - microrobots - has escaped from the laboratory. This cloud is self-sustaining and self-reproducing. It is intelligent and it learns from experience. For all practical purposes, it is alive. It has been programmed as a predator. It is evolving swiftly, becoming more deadly with each passing hour. Every attempt to destroy it has failed. And we are prey." - from the book cover

Mr. Holtz	<i>The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks</i> by Rebecca Skloot	Nonfiction
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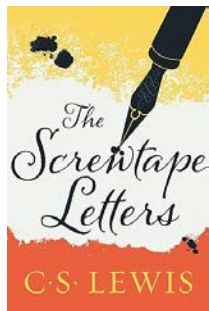
"From a single, abbreviated life grew a seemingly immortal line of cells that made some of the most crucial innovations in modern science possible. And from that same life, and those cells, Rebecca Skloot has fashioned in *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* a fascinating and moving story of medicine and family, of how life is sustained in laboratories and in memory. Henrietta Lacks was a mother of five in Baltimore, a poor African American migrant from the tobacco farms of Virginia, who died from a cruelly aggressive cancer at the age of 30 in 1951. A sample of her cancerous tissue, taken without her knowledge or consent, as was the custom then, turned out to provide one of the holy grails of mid-century biology: human cells that could survive--even thrive--in the lab. Known as HeLa cells, their stunning potency gave scientists a building block for countless breakthroughs, beginning with the cure for polio. Meanwhile, Henrietta's family continued to live in poverty and frequently poor health, and their discovery decades later of her unknowing contribution--and her cells' strange survival--left them full of pride, anger, and suspicion. For a decade, Skloot doggedly but compassionately gathered the threads of these stories, slowly gaining the trust of the family while helping them learn the truth about Henrietta, and with their aid she tells a rich and haunting story that asks the questions, Who owns our bodies? And who carries our memories?" - Tom Nissley, *Amazon Review*

Ms. McAden	<i>Daisy Darker</i> by Alice Feeney	Fiction
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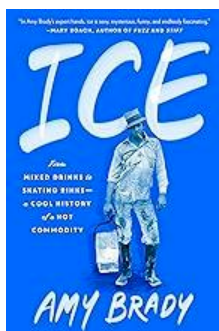
"Daisy Darker was born with a broken heart. Now after years of avoiding each other, Daisy Darker's entire family is assembling for Nana's 80th birthday party in her crumbling gothic house on a tiny tidal island. The family arrives, each of them harboring secrets. When the tide comes in, they will be cut off from the rest of the world for eight hours. But at the stroke of midnight, as a storm rages, Nana is found dead. And an hour later, the next family member follows... Trapped on an island where someone is killing them one by one, the Darkers must reckon with their present mystery as well as their past secrets, before the tide goes out and all is revealed."

Ms. McAden	<i>The Screwtape Letters</i> by C.S. Lewis	Fiction
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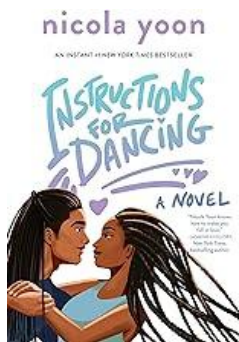
"C.S. Lewis's *The Screwtape Letters* has entertained and enlightened readers the world over with its sly and ironic portrayal of human life and foibles from the unique vantage point of Screwtape, a highly placed assistant to 'Our Father Below.' At once wildly comic, deadly serious, and strikingly original, C.S. Lewis gives us the correspondence of the wordly-wise devil to his nephew Wormwood, a novice demon in charge of securing the damnation of an ordinary young man. *The Screwtape Letters* is the most engaging account of temptation—and triumph over it—ever written. "

Ms. Pate	<i>Ice: From Mixed Drinks to Skating Rinks -- a Cool History of a Hot Commodity</i> by Amy Brady	Nonfiction
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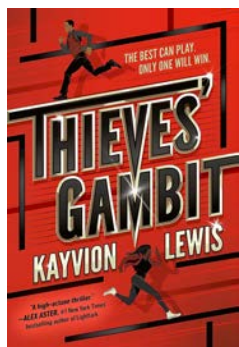
Have you ever wondered why colder climates like New England have ice cream stands that serve hard ice cream while warmer states often serve soft-serve ice cream? Ice. When I heard this I was fascinated at the power ice has over a summer favorite: eating ice cream. So, when I heard about this book, I became excited to learn more about a three-letter word I take for granted. This book will explore the "two-hundred-year-old history of ice in America . . . [and] the surprising present-day uses of ice in sports, medicine, and sustainable energy" (Amazon). Enjoy this book with an iced coffee, frozen lemonade, or ice cream as you consider the impact of frozen H2O.

Ms. Pate	<i>Instructions for Dancing</i> by Nicola Yoon	Young Adult Fiction
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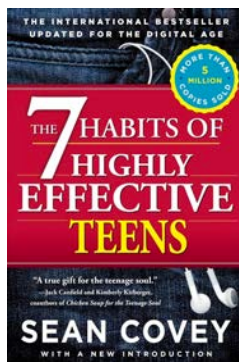
Did you love reading *Everything, Everything* or *The Sun is Also a Star*? If so, then this is your next summer reading book: “Evie Thomas doesn’t believe in love anymore. Especially after the strangest thing occurs one otherwise ordinary afternoon: She witnesses a couple kiss and is overcome with a vision of how their romance began . . . and how it will end. After all, even the greatest love stories end with a broken heart, eventually. As Evie tries to understand why this is happening, she finds herself at La Brea Dance Studio, learning to waltz, fox-trot, and tango with a boy named X. X is everything that Evie is not: adventurous, passionate, daring. . . . Falling for X is definitely not what Evie had in mind. If her visions of heartbreak have taught her anything, it’s that no one escapes love unscathed. But as she and X dance around and toward each other, Evie is forced to question all she thought she knew about life and love. In the end, is love worth the risk?” - Amazon

Ms. Pate	<i>Thieves’ Gambit</i> by Kayvion Lewis	Young Adult Fiction
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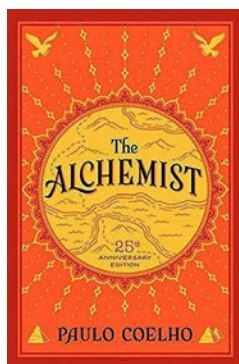
When I saw that this book was described as “*The Inheritance Games* meets *Ocean’s Eleven*,” I knew this was a must read. Mystery and suspense is my favorite genre, and I’m excited to read this book this summer that is sure to be full of action: “At only seventeen years old, Ross Quest is already a master thief, especially adept at escape plans. Her plan to run away from her legendary family of thieves takes an unexpected turn, leaving her mother’s life hanging in the balance. In a desperate bid, she enters the Thieves’ Gambit, a series of dangerous, international heists where killing the competition isn’t exactly off limits, but the grand prize is a wish for anything in the world—a wish that could save her mom. When she learns two of her competitors include her childhood nemesis and a handsome, smooth-talking guy who might also want to steal her heart, winning the Gambit becomes trickier than she imagined. Ross will have to decide who to con and who to trust before time runs out. After all, only one of them can win” - Amazon.

Dr. Schneider	<i>The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens</i> by Sean Covey	Nonfiction
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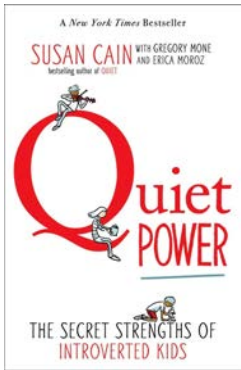
*Effective Teens* has been to millions of teens. . . a handbook to self-esteem and success. Now updated for the digital age, this classic book applies the timeless principles of 7 Habits to the tough issues and life-changing decisions teens face. Covey provides a simple approach to help teens improve self-image, build friendships, resist peer pressure, achieve their goals, and appreciate their parents, as well as tackle the new challenges of our time, like cyberbullying and social media. In addition, this book is stuffed with cartoons, clever ideas, great quotes, and incredible stories about real teens from all over the world.” - Amazon

Dr. Schneider	<i>The Alchemist</i> by Paulo Coelho	Fiction
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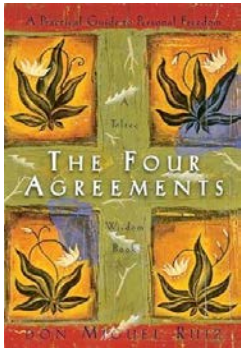
*The Alchemist* is an enchanting fantasy about Santiago, a Spanish shepherd boy, who desires to see the world, and dreams of a hidden treasure. This sets him off on a quest through which he discovers his own strengths and gifts, the value of friendship and the power of love. His quest for experience and treasure becomes a spiritual journey on which he discovers that the entire world is filled with signs of its creator. He also discovers the divine spirit within himself.

Dr. Schneider	<b><i>Quiet Power: The Secret Strength of Introverted Kids</i> by Susan Cain</b>	<b>Nonfiction</b>
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After *Quiet*, her study of the value of introverts in the adult world became a bestseller a few years ago, Cain recognized a need to address the same issue for kids. Using her own story and those of young people who dealt with the challenges of school, extracurricular activities, family and friends in their own quiet way, she offers insight and strategies to negotiate a loud world and make a difference in it.

Mrs. Soldner	<b><i>The Four Agreements</i> by Don Miguel Ruiz</b>	<b>Nonfiction</b>
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In *The Four Agreements*, bestselling author don Miguel Ruiz proposes the source of self-limiting beliefs that rob us of joy and create needless suffering. Based on ancient Toltec wisdom, The Four Agreements offers insight into how to approach the world and community around us in a way that promotes authentic love, lasting peace, and a balanced emotional experience.