

THE WASHINGTON LATIN SCHOOL

UPPER SCHOOL READING LIST

FICTION

Andromeda Strain by Michael Crichton

Alien germs invade an Arizona town and threaten to destroy it.

Annie, Between the States by Laura Elliott

Annie is torn between competing loyalties during the Civil War. This terrific book brims with adventure, romance, intrigue, and moral struggles as Annie finds herself embroiled in the heartbreak of a divided nation.

Ask Me No Questions by Marina Budhos

Nadira and her family are illegal aliens -- running from the country they thought was their home. For years since emigrating from Bangladesh, they have lived on expired visas in New York City, hoping they could someday realize their dream of becoming legal citizens of the United States. But after 9/11, everything changes.

The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing by M. T. Anderson

Octavian, a young African American is raised as part of a science experiment in the years leading up to and during the Revolutionary War.

Blood on the River James Town 1607 by Elisa Carbone

Twelve-year-old Samuel Collier becomes the page of Captain John Smith and boards the ship bound for the New World with high hopes. But beginning with the stormy journey and his first contact with the native people, he realizes that the New World is nothing like he had ever imagined.

The Book Thief by Marjus Zusak

The story of Liesel, a young German girl during World War II, whose book-stealing and story-telling talents help sustain her family, their neighbors, and the Jewish man they are hiding.

Captains Courageous by Rudyard Kipling

The spoiled son of a millionaire is rescued by New England fisherman who put him to work on their boat.

Code Orange by Caroline Cooney

Mitty, a likable slacker at a NY prep school, ignores his looming biology paper until the last minute. When he begins to research smallpox he finds an envelope in an old book that contains a couple of smallpox scabs from the 1902 epidemic. Has he released the virus again?

Criss Cross by Lynne Rae Perkins

The summer she is 14, Debbie wishes for something different to happen, and while nothing dramatic results from this wish, she and her friends all sense the changes that lay just ahead for them as they grow up. Appealing characters, lots of drawings, and some poetry enliven this realistic story.

The Dark Lord of Derkholm by Diana Wynne Jones (or the sequel **The Year of the Griffin**)

This fantasy tells of a magical world invaded each year by off-world Pilgrim Parties who participate in orchestrated battles between the powers of good and evil.

The Ear, the Eye and the Arm by Nancy Farmer

Set in Zimbabwe in the year 2194, the three children of the nation's leader are kidnapped and face one fantastic adventure after another trying to find their way home again.

Emil and Karl by Yankev Glatshteyn

Two young boys--one Jewish, the other not--suddenly find themselves without homes or families in Vienna on the eve of World War II. This book, newly translated into English, gives a portrait of a world descending into madness as experienced by two innocent children.

Eyes of the Emperor by Graham Salisbury

Eddy Okana lies about his age and joins the Army in his hometown of Honolulu only weeks before the Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor. Suddenly Americans see him as the enemy, and even the U.S. Army doubts the loyalty of Japanese American soldiers.

Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury

Bradbury's classic and chilling story of a future where people decide to burn books, destroy literature, and eradicate written history.

Fantastic Voyage by Isaac Asimov

A team of miniaturized doctors enters the bloodstream of a prominent scientist to destroy a blood clot that threatens his life.

Gifts by Ursula LeGuin

The Uplanders learn to accept and understand the wonderful and terrible powers of their magical gifts.

The Giver by Lois Lowry (also **Gathering Blue** and **The Messenger**)

The classic, unsettling book about a perfect, controlling society and the role young Jonas is asked to play in it.

The Glory Field by Walter Dean Myers

This compelling saga follows an African American family from Africa to South Carolina over a period of 250 years. The book focuses on the ongoing struggle for freedom, dignity, and continued ownership of the family's precious land.

The Last Dragon by Silvana de Mari

This magical journey tells the story of a world now plagued by intolerance and wickedness, and the elf and the dragon who together fight for its redemption. The author weaves a beautifully crafted tale, filled with humor, horror, desperation, and dreams.

Letters from a Slave Girl by Mary E. Lyons

Harriet Jacobs describes her life as a slave and her escape to freedom in a series of letters to family and friends.

Lightning Thief by Rick Riordan

Percy is ADHD and he has been expelled from six schools. But why are some of his teachers trying to kill him? His father is Poseidon, he is a half-blood, a lot of the gods and goddesses are really mad, and it seems to be up to Percy and his new friend Annabeth (daughter of Athena) to set things right.

Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy by Gary Schmidt

Turner Buckminster hates his new home - a small Maine town where the kids are unwelcoming and he can't play his beloved baseball - until he meets Lizzie, a smart and spunky African American girl who lives in a small, tight-knit community on a nearby island. But the white residents of Turner's town have plans for that island, pitting Lizzie and Turner against the town leaders.

Mango-Shaped Space by Wendy Mass

Afraid that she is crazy, 13-year-old Mia, who sees a special color with every letter, number, and sound, keeps this a secret until she becomes overwhelmed by school and the death of Mango, her cat. Mia's condition, synesthesia, is a real one, and the novel gives insight into what it is like to live with this unusual disorder.

Monkey Town: The Summer of the Scopes Trial by Ronald Kidd

In a story rife with first love and the pain of growing up, master storyteller Ronald Kidd reincarnates the most enduring trial of the twentieth century.

My Brother Sam is Dead by James Collier

In this classic story of the American Revolution, young Tim is caught between his brother's patriotism and his father's Tory sympathies.

Oliver Twist by Charles Dickens

An orphan is caught up with a gang of young thieves on the streets of London.

The Once and Future King by T.H. White

Open this classic and begin an adventurous journey into medieval England and through King Arthur's remarkable life from birth to the end of his reign.

The Pearl by John Steinbeck

Kino, a poor Mexican pearl fisher, finds a valuable pearl. Yet instead of bringing blessings, the pearl acts as a harbinger of misfortune to Kino and his wife.

Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen

Elizabeth Bennett is repelled and attracted by the arrogant Mr. Darcy in this classic story of their spirited courtship.

The Red Kayak by Priscilla Cummings

When tragedy strikes on the Chesapeake Bay, young Brady must choose between doing the right thing and getting his friends in trouble.

The River Between Us by Richard Peck

Howard's grandmother recounts the story of her teenage years during the Civil War when a steamboat delivered two strangers to Grand Tower, Illinois. The townspeople worry that the girls may be Confederate spies, but the truth is far more complicated, and it changes Howard's understanding of his family history forever.

River of Earth by James Still

This book tells the story, through the eyes of a small boy, of an Appalachian family struggling to survive in the 1920's.

Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe

A classic island survival tale.

Sleeping Freshmen Never Lie by David Lubar

You'll laugh out loud as Scott recounts his attempts to navigate freshman year, including joining the newspaper and trying out for the play just to have a chance with a certain girl.

Stargirl by Jerry Spinelli

At first Mica High School does not know what to make of Stargirl, a teen who animates the school with her colorful personality. Eventually they seem to accept her until she steps too far out of the teenaged "norm" and suddenly finds herself shunned for her refusal to conform.

The Three Musketeers by Alexander Dumas

The adventures of four swashbuckling heroes who lived during the reigns of the French kings Louis XIII and Louis XIV.

The Time Machine by H.G. Wells

A scientist invents a time machine and uses it to travel hundreds of thousands of years into the future.

A Tree Grows in Brooklyn by Betty Smith

Francie Nolan grows up in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn from 1902 to 1919.

Under the Blood Red Sun by Graham Salisbury

Torn between his love of all things American and the traditional ways of his parents and grandparents, a young Japanese American comes of age during the political upheaval of WWII.

Watership Down by Richard Adams

The adventures of a group of rabbits searching for a new warren where they can live in peace.

The Water Mirror by Kai Meyer (and sequels)

This inventive and original fantasy is set among the canals of a fantastical medieval Venice and grounded by powerful imagery of light and shadow, stone and water.

NON-FICTION

5,000 Miles to Freedom: Ellen and William Craft's Flight from Slavery by Dennis Fradin

This thrilling true tale chronicles Ellen and William Craft's lives from their flight from slavery in Georgia to their rise to heroes of the Abolitionist movement.

10,000 Days of Thunder: A History of the Vietnam War by Philip Caputo

A Pulitzer Prize- winning journalist writes about our country's most controversial war for young readers. From the first stirrings of unrest in Vietnam under French colonial rule, to American intervention, to the battle at Hamburger Hill, to the Tet Offensive, to the fall of Saigon, the author explores the war that changed the lives of a generation of Americans.

American Plague : The True and Terrifying Story of the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793 by Jim Murphy

Hitting in the first 20 years of the new nation, the yellow fever epidemic was a crisis of monumental proportions. History, science, politics, and public health come together in this dramatic account, filled with heroes, confusion, and a constitutional crisis.

Anne Frank: Diary of a Young Girl by Anne Frank

Anne Frank recorded exactly what she saw and felt when her family went into hiding for two years during the Nazi occupation of Amsterdam.

A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian Trail by Bill Bryson

Upon returning to America after two decades abroad, the author reconnects with his homeland by hiking the Appalachian trail.

Building Big by David MacCaulay

If you find yourself fascinated by how large structures are designed, built, and then endure through the ages, David Macauley's book certainly will capture your attention.

Cave Paintings to Picasso by Henry Sayre

Calling all art lovers! Here in one small award-winning volume is the entire history of art as shown through illustrations and explanations about 50 of the world's most famous works from all times and cultures.

The Color of Water: A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother by James McBride

Written in remembrance of his Polish-born, Southern-raised Jewish mother, who married a black man and raised twelve children, all of whom completed college, this book is a classic of the memoir genre and a truly American story.

Dream of Freedom: the Civil Rights Movement from 1954 to 1968 by Diane McWhorter

This critically acclaimed and powerful book examines the rise of the Civil Rights movement in America, the men and women whose lives made an impact in the pursuit of social and political equality, and landmark Supreme Court cases that changed the fabric of American society.

Fifth Chinese Daughter by Jade Snow Wong

This memoir of growing up in pre-World War II San Francisco presents a universal story of a child learning to assert her own identity.

Forbidden Schoolhouse: The True and Dramatic Story of Prudence Crandall and her Students by Suzanne Jermain

In Connecticut in the 1830's, a Quaker woman overcomes violent opposition to open a boarding school for African American girls.

Gandhi, Great Soul by John Severance

This excellent biography not only tells the story of Gandhi's inspirational public life, but also includes fascinating, less well known details about his personal life, such as his arranged marriage at age 13, his student years, and the experiences that led him to become one of the world's great peacemakers.

Getting Away with Murder: The True Story of the Emmett Till Case by Chris Crowe

An examination of the kidnapping, murder and trial that helped set the wheels of the civil rights movement in motion.

Gifted Hands by Ben Carson

Follow the inspiring story of Ben Carson's odyssey from his inner-city childhood to director of pediatric neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins.

Go Figure! A Totally Cool Book About Numbers by Johnny Ball

The Good Fight: How World War II Was Won by Stephen Ambrose

Historian Stephen Ambrose has prepared this richly illustrated chronicle of World War II for young readers.

Hope in the Unseen : An American Odyssey from the Inner City to the Ivy League
by Ron Suskind

The true story of a gifted African-American student who relied on his intelligence, faith, and determination to journey from his crime-ridden high school in Washington, D.C. to Brown University.

In Defense of Liberty by Russell Freedman

This timely discussion of the Constitution and civil liberties includes a history of the Bill of Rights, a chapter on each subsequent amendment, and an analysis of the contemporary scene, including the conflicts now raging about national security and individual freedom in post-911 America.

Let Me Play: The Story of Title IX, the Law that Changed the Future of Girls in America by Karen Blumenthal

A little-noticed section of the Education Amendments of 1972 had a revolutionary effect on the number of girls in sports, as well as their enrollment in higher education. This engaging history is carefully documented and illustrated with photos from the times.

Maritcha: A Nineteenth Century American Girl by Tonya Bolden

Maritcha Rémond Lyons, born free in New York City, successfully petitioned the state for permission to attend an all-white high school in 1860's Rhode Island. Archival photos, period sketches, and paintings help document the lives of blacks in the "free North" just before the Civil War.

Martha Graham: A Dancer's Life by Russell Freedman

An excellent biography of one of the founders of modern dance.

Mosque by David Maccaulay

Through this detailed and respectful explanation of the design of a 16th century mosque in Turkey, the author explains the mosque functioned in Islamic society.

Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story about Brain Science by John Fleischman

Phineas Gage was truly a man with a hole in his head. A railroad construction foreman, was blasting rock near Cavendish, Vermont, in 1848 when an iron rod was shot through his brain. He survived eleven years and became a textbook case in brain science.

Race to Save the Lord God Bird by Phillip Hoose

This fascinating award-winner chronicles the attempt to save from extinction the ivory-billed woodpecker, once prevalent in the southeastern United States, but last spotted in Cuba in 1987. You'll be riveted by this true environmental tale full of mystery and suspense.

Red Scarf Girl: A Memoir of the Cultural Revolution by Ji-Li Jiang

This autobiography details the author's experiences as a teenager in the Cultural Revolution.

Restless Spirit: The Life and Work of Dorothea Lange by Elizabeth Patridge
The life of a photographer best known for her moving portraits of people in the Dust Bowl brought to life through photographs and entries from her letters and journals.

Seabiscuit: An American Legend by Laura Hillenbrand
The true and detailed account of how three men worked together to turn a rough-hewn, undersized horse into one of the fastest horses in racing history.

Understanding the Holy Land: Answering Questions about the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict by Mitch Frank
It's in the news everyday. This balanced book helps to explain the historical background to and causes of the age-old enmity between the two groups.

With Courage and Cloth: Winning the Fight for a Women's Right to Vote by Ann Bausum
This richly-illustrated history of women's suffrage details the long and difficult struggle, competing strategies, and violence sometimes directed at the female activists.

Zlata's Diary by Zlata Filipovic
A record from 1991 to 1993 that describes the hardships of living in Sarajevo during the war.

POETRY

19 Varieties of Gazelle: Poems from the Middle East by Naomi Shihab Nye
This collection of poems offers a celebration of Nye's Arab-American heritage, as well as a call for peace in the troubled region.

A Maze Me: Poems for Girls by Naomi Shihab Nye
With splendid imagery and a quiet, contemplative voice these free-verse poems capture the random thoughts and ambiguous feelings of a 13-year-old girl moving from childhood and attempting to understand and connect with her world and herself.

Carver: A Life in Poems by Marilyn Nelson
Fifty-nine lyrical poems recount the life of botanist George Washington Carver.

Dream Keeper and Other Poems by Langston Hughes
Brian Pinkney illustrated this edition of Hughes' poetry, and it speaks as powerfully now as it did when first published over a quarter century ago.

Locomotion by Jacqueline Woodson
Winner of the 2004 Coretta Scott King Award, this novel in verse recounts how Lonnie, inspired by his teacher, begins to write about his life in a series of poems about his friends, his foster mom, his little sister Lili, and the death of his parents.

The Poet Slave of Cuba by Margarita Engle

The boyhood of the 19th-century Cuban salve, who secretly learned to read and write poetry in a world of unspeakable brutality

Red Hot Salsa: Bilingual Poems on Life, Love, and Victory by Lori Marie Carlson
Established and emerging poets offer provocative glimpses into the lives and dreams of young Latinos in the United States.

A Wreath for Emmett Till by Marilyn Nelson
A series of poems reveals the cost of racial hatred in the brutal lynching of a young African American boy in 1956.

SHORT STORIES/MYTHS

145th Street: Short Stories by Walter Dean Myers
Authentic voices leave reader knowing how life is lived on 145th Street.

Adventures of Sherlock Holmes by Arthur Conan Doyle
Holmes and his loyal friend Dr. Watson comb the foggy streets of London in search of solutions. Can you solve the crimes before Mr. Holmes?

All Creatures Great and Small by James Herriot
A Yorkshire veterinarian shares stories of his work.

D'Aulaires Book of Greek Myths by Ingri D'Aulaire and Edgar Parin D'Aulaire
No education is complete without knowledge of Greek mythology. Here is one of the best versions for middle schoolers, complete with beautiful illustrations of gods, goddesses, heroes, and heroines as they behave sometimes nobly and sometimes very badly.

Fire and Wings: Dragon Tales from East and West by Marianne Carus
Fifteen stories about the ever-popular legendary creatures, written by well-known authors and filled with traditional folklore themes such as loyalty, tests, and riddles.

People Could Fly: American Black Folk Tales by Virginia Hamilton
African American folktales inventively use animals and fantasy to relay stories of hope and freedom. Winner of the Coretta Scott King Award, this collection celebrates the indomitable human spirit.

Sports Shorts: An Anthology of Short Stories by Joseph Bruchac
A collection of eight stories, each one written by a different acclaimed author, recalling their days of glory (or not) as school athlete.