

## 2026 HS Summer Reading

### Fiction

**Adamo, Meredith.** *Not Like Other Girls.* 430 p.

When Jo-Lynn Kirby's former best friend--pretty, nice Maddie Price--comes to her claiming to be in trouble, Jo assumes it's some kind of joke. After all, Jo has been an outcast ever since her nude photos were leaked--and since everyone decided she deserved it. There's no way Maddie would actually come to her for help. But then Maddie is gone. Everyone is quick to write off Maddie as a runaway, but Jo can't shake the feeling there's more to the story. To find out the truth, Jo needs to get back in with the people who left her behind, and the only way back in is through Hudson Harper-Moore. An old fling of Jo's with his own reasons for wanting to find Maddie, Hudson hatches a fake dating scheme to get Jo back into their clique. But being back on the inside means Jo must confront everything she'd rather forget: the boys who betrayed her, the whispers that she had it coming, and the secrets that tore her and Maddie apart. As Jo digs deeper into Maddie's disappearance, she's left to wonder who she's really searching for: Maddie, or the girl she used to be.

**Baptiste, Tracey.** *Boy 2.0.* 293 p.

When Coal discovers he can turn invisible, he searches for answers about his past with the help of his friends and his new foster family.

**Cho, Ian X.** *Aisle Nine.* 260 p.

Even though the world is filled with portals to hell and bloodthirsty demons pop out of them on the reg, Jasper spends his days and nights working as a check-out clerk at the Here For You discount mart. Sure, there's even a hell portal in aisle nine, which means he could be maimed, dismembered, or even eaten whole during every shift, but at least at the mart he can be near his crush, Kyle Kuan. That she doesn't seem to even notice that he exists seems about right to Jasper, because Jasper can't remember anything that happened to him before his accident five months ago, either.

**Cobell, K. A.** *Looking for Smoke.* 426 p.

Since moving to the Blackfeet Reservation with her parents, Mara Racette has felt like an outsider, taunted by her tight-knit classmates for growing up far away. So when a local girl includes Mara in a traditional Blackfeet giveaway to honor her missing sister, Mara thinks she'll finally make some friends. Instead, a girl from the giveaway, Samantha White Tail, is found murdered. Because the four members of the giveaway group were the last to see Samantha alive, each becomes a person of interest in the investigation: New girl Mara, who hated Samantha for being particularly cruel. Grief-stricken Loren Arnoux, who was Samantha's best friend until Loren's sister's disappearance drove a wedge between them. Class clown Brody Clark, whose unreciprocated crush on Samantha is

an open secret. And tough guy Eli First Kill, who has his own complicated history with Samantha. Despite deep mistrust, the four must now take matters into their own hands and clear their names. Even though one of them may be the murderer.

**Collins, Suzanne. *Sunrise on the Reaping*. 382 p.**

As the day dawns on the fiftieth annual Hunger Games, fear grips the districts of Panem. This year, in honor of the Quarter Quell, twice as many tributes will be taken from their homes. Back in District 12, Haymitch Abernathy is trying not to think too hard about his chances. All he cares about is making it through the day and being with the girl he loves. When Haymitch's name is called, he can feel all his dreams break. He's torn from his family and his love, shuttled to the Capitol with the three other District 12 tributes: a young friend who's nearly a sister to him, a compulsive oddsmaker, and the most stuck-up girl in town. As the Games begin, Haymitch understands he's been set up to fail. But there's something in him that wants to fight . . . and have that fight reverberate far beyond the deadly arena.

**Galarza, Josh. *The Great Cool Ranch Dorito in the Sky*. 299 p.**

Fueling all his anxieties into his comic book series, Brett must face the painful truths of his real life and his escalating eating disorder when someone posts his journal--and his deepest insecurities--online.

**Graves, Byron. *Rez Ball*. 357 p.**

These days, Tre Brun is happiest when he is playing basketball on the Red Lake Reservation high school team--even though he can't help but be constantly gut-punched with memories of his big brother, Jaxon, who died in an accident. When Jaxon's former teammates on the varsity team offer to take Tre under their wing, he sees this as his shot to represent his Ojibwe rez all the way to their first state championship. This is the first step toward his dream of playing in the NBA, no matter how much the odds are stacked against him. But stepping into his brother's shoes as a star player means that Tre can't mess up. Not on the court, not at school, and not with his new friend, gamer Khiana, who he is definitely not falling in love with. After decades of rez teams almost making it, Tre needs to take his team to state. Because if he can live up to Jaxon's dreams, their story isn't over yet.

**Korman, Gordon. *Slugfest*. 292p.**

Forced to take Physical Education Equivalency, aka "Slugfest," in summer school so he can maintain his star spot on the JV football team, Yash recruits his fellow PE rejects to train with him and pass this course, an endeavor that turns into a summer he'll never forget.

**Lukoff, Kyle. *A World Worth Saving*. 337 p.**

After coming out as trans, A is forced to attend weekly Save Our Sons and Daughters meetings, where he uncovers the terrifying truth that the group is run by a demon feeding on their pain and is part of a larger, darker force preying on the world's vulnerable.

**McBride, Amber. *The Leaving Room*. 203 p. Verse Novel**

Gospel is the Keeper of the Leaving Room--a place all young people must phase through when they die. The young are never ready to leave; they need a moment to remember and a Keeper to help their wispy souls along. When a random door opens and a Keeper named Melodee arrives, their souls become entangled. Gospel's seriousness melts and Melodee's fear of connection fades, but still--are Keepers allowed to fall in love? Now they must find a way out of the Leaving Room and be unafraid of their love. In a novel that takes place over four minutes, National Book Award finalist Amber McBride explores connection, memory, and hope in ways that are unforgettable and poignant.

**Painter, Lynn. *Fake Skating*. 437 p.**

Excited to return to Minnesota and reconnect with her childhood sweetheart Alec, Dani discovers her nerdy best friend is now a hunky hockey star, and only a fake-dating situation may truly reunite them.

**Pena-Govea, Rene. *Estella, undrowning*. 354 p.**

Seventeen-year-old Estela grapples with racial tensions after placing second to a non-Latino student in a Latine poetry contest, all while battling anxiety over her family's looming eviction.

**Quindlen, Kelly. *Her Name in the Sky*. 400 p.**

Seventeen-year-old Hannah wants to spend her senior year of high school going to football games and Mardi Gras parties. She wants to drive along the oak-lined streets of Louisiana's Garden District and lie on the hot sand of Florida's beaches. She wants to spend every night making memories with her tight-knit group of friends. The last thing she wants is to fall in love with a girl--especially when that girl is her best friend, Baker.

**Reynolds, Jason. *Twenty-four Seconds from now . . . : a love story*. 239 p.**

In a series of moments spanning two years, seventeen-year-old Neon navigates the progression of his relationship with Aria, culminating in a case of the jitters as the two intend to take the next big step in their relationship.

**Schu, John. *Louder Than Hunger*. 516 p. Verse Novel**

Jake volunteers at a nursing home because he likes helping people. He likes skating and singing, playing Bingo and Name That Tune, and reading mysteries and comics aloud to his teachers. He also likes avoiding people his own age . . . and the cruelty of mirrors . . . and food. Jake has read about kids like him in books--the weird one, the outsider--and would do anything not to be that kid, including shrink himself down to nothing. But the less he eats, the bigger he feels. How long can Jake punish himself before he truly disappears? A fictionalized account of the author's experiences and emotions living in residential treatment facilities as a young teen with an eating disorder.

**Smith, Sasha Peyton.** *The Rose Bargain.* 385 p.

Ivy Benton must enter into a marriage contest with a fae prince in order to free her sister from a bargain previously made with the vicious fae queen of England.

**Watson, Renee.** *All the Blues in the Sky.* 182 p. Verse Novel

When Sage's best friend dies, Sage struggles with grief and feels that she is at fault, but when she joins a grief group, she slowly learns to heal.

### **Fiction Authors We Recommend Always:**

Alexander, Kwame

King, A. S.

Trueman, Terry

Anderson, Laurie Halse

Levithan, David

Wein, Elizabeth

Barnes, Jennifer

Reynolds, Jason

Zusak, Markus

Bruchac, Joseph

Sepetys, Ruta

Crutcher, Chris

Stone, Nic

Dessen, Sarah

Strasser, Todd

Green, John

Thomas, Angie

## **Non - Fiction**

**Bausum, Ann.** *White Lies: How the South Lost the Civil War, Then Rewrote the History.* 272 p.

Investigates how false narratives about the American Civil War reshaped public memory.

**Dunn, Debbie Loren.** *The real Rosalind : the truth about Rosalind Franklin's DNA discovery and how it was erased.* 240 p.

The real Rosalind : the truth about Rosalind Franklin's DNA discovery and how it was erased.

**Fleming, Candace.** *Death in the Jungle.* 356 p.

A chronicle of one of American history's most notorious cults, which includes firsthand accounts, that follows Jim Jones from humble origins to "Jonestown" in Guyana, South America, and traces his transformation of Peoples Temple into an experiment in mind control.

**Fong, Debbie.** *Banned together : our fight for readers' rights.* 294 p.

A multi-genre, young adult anthology that spotlights the transformative power of books while equipping teens to fight for the freedom to read, featuring the voices of 15 diverse, award-winning authors and illustrators.

**Gaddy, Kristina R. *A most perilous world : the true story of the young abolitionists and their crusade against slavery.* 343 p.**

Tells the story of America's tumultuous years leading up to the Civil War and of the war itself from the viewpoints of four children of famous abolitionists, including those of Frederick Douglass and William Lloyd Garrison. Gaddy crafts a surprisingly contemporary braided coming-of-age narrative, supported by meticulous research and featuring dozens of primary documents. Each of these four young people—two white, two Black—was strongly committed to the anti-slavery cause but felt just as keenly a need to make their own names, away from the often over-protective or disapproving shadows of the famous adults in their lives. This is a true story of how a torch of resistance is passed and how a new generation makes its mark.

**Green, John. *Everything Is Tuberculosis.* 208p.**

Tuberculosis has been entwined with humanity for millennia. Once romanticized as a malady of poets, today tuberculosis is seen as a disease of poverty that walks the trails of injustice and inequity we blazed for it. In 2019, author John Green met Henry Reider, a young tuberculosis patient at Lakka Government Hospital in Sierra Leone. John became fast friends with Henry, a boy with spindly legs and a big, goofy smile. In the years since that first visit to Lakka, Green has become a vocal advocate for increased access to treatment and wider awareness of the healthcare inequities that allow this curable, preventable infectious disease to also be the deadliest, killing over a million people every year.

**Rosenstock, Barb. *American spirits : the famous Fox sisters and the mysterious fad that haunted a nation.* 304 p.**

Rap. Rap. Rap. The eerie sound was first heard in March of 1848 at the home of the Fox family in Hydesville, New York. The family's two daughters, Kate and Maggie, soon discovered that they could communicate with the spirit that was making these uncanny noises. This strange incident, and the ones that followed, generated a media frenzy beyond anything the Fox sisters could have imagined.

**Shante, Angela. *The Unboxing of a Black Girl.* 168 p.**

Set in New York City in the '90s, Angela Shante's poems and stories paint a mosaic of childhood that is shaped by the past and reverberates into the present. As Shante navigates the city through memory, this timeless book illuminates the places where Black girls are nurtured or boxed in, through stories and poems about expectations, exploitation, love, loss, and self-realization. Her poems center on pivotal moments of Black childhood, using footnotes that encourage you to listen to songs, watch movies, and even learn how to play Spades to further contextualize and celebrate Black culture in every aspect of life. But even with Black joy, life ain't no crystal stair. Between fond memories, Shante also explores the dark corners of childhood by showing us the ways adultification, misogynoir, and sexual assault can impact girlhood. Every piece in this memoir invites you to unpack the past—to find and transcend the expectations and boxes the world puts Black girls in.

## Notable Non-Fiction Authors:

Bryson, Bill  
Gladwell, Malcolm  
Gladwell, Malcolm  
Harari, Yuval Noah

Kolbert, Elizabeth  
Krakauer, Jon  
Mukherjee, Siddhartha

Ogle, Rex  
Sheinkin, Steve  
Walls, Jeanette  
Wright, Lawrence

## Graphic Fiction

**Fordham, Fred.** *A Wizard of Earthsea: A Graphic Novel.* 272 p.

A graphic adaptation of A Wizard of Earthsea about power, responsibility, and growth.

**Glendining, Bex.** *On Starlit Shores.* 200 p.

A fantasy romance set in a vividly imagined coastal world.

**Muniz, Deya.** *The Princess and the Grilled Cheese Sandwich.* 256 p.

A romantic and humorous story involving disguise, royalty, and unexpected love.

**Ostertag, Molly Knox.** *The Deep Dark.* 240 p.

A supernatural story about inner struggles, identity, and friendship.

**Teer, Samuel.** *Brownstone.* 256 p.

A coming of age story about identity and reconnecting with cultural heritage.

**Van Lieshout, Maria.** *Song of a Blackbird.* 247 p.

In 1943 Amsterdam, Emma Bergsma's world changes when she witnesses Jewish families being forcibly deported to concentration camps. That pivotal moment lights a fire within her, and she decides to join the Dutch Resistance. Before long, Emma is drawn into a clandestine world of printing presses and counterfeiters, with thousands of lives on the line. In 2011 Amsterdam, teenage Annick's world has changed as well. A search for a bone marrow donor for her beloved oma leads to a shocking revelation: her grandmother was secretly adopted as a child. The only clues to finding their lost family are a series of art prints hanging on the wall--each signed by a mysterious 'Emma B.

**Walls, Jasmine.** *Brooms.* 288 p.

A magical story set during the Dust Bowl featuring competition and resistance.

## Graphic Non-fiction

**Chan, Ruth.** *Uprooted: a memoir about what happens when your family moves back.* 285 p.

Ruth Chan recounts in graphic novel form how her family moved from Toronto to Hong Kong and how she dealt with the change with her father's stories of how her family survived difficult circumstances.

**Dumais, Brandon.** *Skating Wilder.* 193 p.

In graphic format, this book celebrates skateboarding, showing the sport's history and recalling the author's fondest memories of skateboarding.

**Parish, Theo.** *Homebody.* 224p.

This warm and accessible memoir explores the non-binary author's journey of gender identity and self-acceptance.