



# Neuse Charter School Senior Academy 2019 Summer Reading Options

We are truly excited to share our book selections for the upcoming 2019 Summer Reading Project! We would like to thank our students, parents, and staff for providing us with detailed feedback from last summer. In an effort to make our Summer Reading Project even more meaningful, you will notice a few changes.

This summer students will be required to select ***one*** of the books listed for their grade level. Students will read their selected book and complete an assignment to demonstrate their knowledge throughout the summer. Students will submit their assignments at the end of August and their teachers will work together to assess their assignments and provide students with detailed feedback by the end of September.

So, how were the book options selected? All Senior Academy English Language Arts (ELA) teachers worked together to identify ten summer reading options for their upcoming students on NCWiseOwl, which is an online database that houses collections of ebooks, learning resources, and websites paid for by the state for all public school students. A cross functional team of staff members that serve the entire K-12 student body reviewed and evaluated the book selections using a rubric consisting of the following categories:

- NCS Mission, NCS Character Traits, and NCS Competencies Alignment
- NC Content Standards Alignment
- Lexile Level
- Age Appropriate Content

The top three books receiving the highest score and meeting the mandatory requirements were selected to be offered as options for students to read over the summer for the assignment. In addition, the book option from last summer will also be an option. In addition to the book titles, we've also included the NCWiseOwl review to help your students reach their decision. Please note that our teachers are still developing the assignments for each book option. This information and all other books meeting the mandatory requirements listed above will be released as additional reading options next month, so please be on the lookout! If you have any questions about the Summer Reading program, please contact our Dean of Academics, Dr. Silver, at [jsilver@neusecharterschool.org](mailto:jsilver@neusecharterschool.org).

## Rising 9th Grade

- **The Last Lecture: by Randy Pausch (Thoughtful Narrative)** The author, a computer science professor diagnosed with terminal cancer, explores his life, the lessons that he has learned, how he has worked to achieve his childhood dreams, and the effect of his diagnosis on him and his family. **This text writing and project will be a Freshman Seminar class work grade.**
  - **Lord of the Flies by William Golding (Psychological Fiction)** Read as adventure or as a study in child behavior, this story of a group of English boys stranded by an aircrash on an uninhabited tropical island has a compelling, haunting quality. Time and place are unspecified but are irrelevant to the narration of the attempt of some of the older boys, approximately age twelve, to establish a form of law and order, and their inability to overcome the irresponsibility, the fear of the unknown, and the savagery to the point of murder to which the group falls prey.
  - **The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind by Willima Kamkwamba (Narrative Nonfiction)** Kamkwamba recounts a period from his childhood living in a small Malawi village. His family was poor, but they got by working as farmers. Kamkwamba was in elementary school, about to graduate to secondary school, when the drought and famine of the mid-2000s upset the patterns of local life. The author deftly describes the devastating effects upon his family: they ate insects, and rations were reduced to only a single mouthful daily. Many around them suffered even worse. Somehow, the family struggled through until the rains returned to nourish a new crop, but they couldn't afford Kamkwamba's school fees. He farmed with his father but also discovered a local library, where he taught himself to engineer a windmill to draw water to irrigate the fields. Those around him thought he was crazy as he salvaged motor parts, a PVC pipe, his father's broken bicycle, and anything else he could find. Kamkwamba did successfully harness the wind, managing to light his family's house, charge community cell phones for a small income, and pump irrigation water. A school inspection team saw the windmill and brought educators to see the teen engineer, who was invited to speak at the African TED conference and given a scholarship. This is a fascinating, well-told account that will intrigue curious minds, even the somewhat anticlimactic closing chapters describing Kamkwamba's education. **This text writing and project will be a Freshman Seminar class work grade.**
  - **Hidden Figures by Margot Lee Shetterly (Collective Biographies)** This is the amazing true story of four African-American female mathematicians at NASA who helped achieve some of the greatest moments in our space program. **Last year's 9th Grade Summer Reading text.**
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## Rising 10th Grade

- **Bad Boy: by Walter Dean Meyers (Memoir)** This superb memoir begins simply with an account of Myers's family history and his boyhood. Vivid detail makes the Harlem of the '40s come alive, from the music and children's games to the everyday struggle for survival. As Myers grows older, however, his story also grows in complexity. Soon readers are caught up in his turbulent adolescence and his slow, painful development as a writer. Even while performing poorly in school, the teen endlessly devoured great works of literature, often in secret. He also wrote, sometimes quitting out of discouragement but always beginning again. Eventually he attended school less and less often, sometimes fighting roaming gang members or delivering "packages" for drug dealers. After dropping out of high school, he enlisted in the army. Sadness and bewilderment infuse these last chapters as Myers faces a bleak future. Intellectually, he's left his family and friends far behind, but his race and circumstances seem to give him few choices. After years of menial jobs, Myers remembered a teacher's advice—"Whatever you do, don't stop writing"—and in time his persistence paid off. This memoir is never preachy; instead, it is a story full of funny anecdotes, lofty ideals, and tender moments. The author's growing awareness of racism and of his own identity as a black man make up one of the most interesting threads.
- **The Jungle: by Upton Sinclair (Political Fiction)** The Jungle presents the tragic story of Jurgis Rudkus, a Lithuanian peasant, and his family and friends, who are lured to America with promises of good wages and quick wealth. In Packingtown, they discover that Chicago is literally a "jungle" in which the non-English speaking immigrant is easily victimized by crooked and unscrupulous employers, political bosses, labor leaders, and real-estate hucksters. They are brutalized by an economic system that exploits them for their labor and then discards them when they are no longer productive. When Jurgis and his family first arrive in Chicago, they are confused and bewildered. He goes to work at a packing house for \$45 a month, but soon his father, wife, and relations must also find work to meet their expenses. Despite their best efforts, they find themselves slipping into poverty, disease, and squalor. When Jurgis is injured at work, he loses his job, his father dies, and his wife and child become ill. After serving a prison term for violence, he drifts miserably from job to job until one night by chance he hears a lecture on socialism. Sinclair's bleakly deterministic novel was meant to dramatize the plight of the workers in the meat-packing industry, but the primary effect of his novel was to arouse his readers' indignation over the unsanitary conditions in which their food was produced. "I aimed at America's heart," he remarked, "and by accident hit it in the stomach." His novel was based on careful investigative journalism and provides a vivid account of the inhumane conditions that many immigrants faced in adjusting to American life. As a naturalistic novel, THE JUNGLE suggests that Jurgis is helpless in struggling against his social environment. Sinclair believed that socialism was the answer, but instead his novel led to reforms in the meat-packing and food-processing industries.

- **A Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansberry (Literary Fiction)** The story tells of a black family's experiences in the Washington Park Subdivision of Chicago's Woodlawn neighborhood as they attempt to "better" themselves with an insurance payout following the death of the father.
  - **Between Two Skies by Joanne O'Sullivan (Historical Fiction)** In August of 2005, Evangeline Riley is starting her junior year of high school in Bayou Perdu, LA. While many kids in her school talk about how they cannot wait to escape small-town life, Evangeline cannot imagine leaving her fairy tale—like surroundings. The daughter of a fisherman, Evangeline has inherited her father's passion for the sea. She feels most at home on the family's skiff, exploring the hidden treasures of the deep bayous. During one of her sojourns, Evangeline comes to the rescue of Tru, who has run himself aground. Although the teens are almost immediately smitten with each other, their budding relationship comes to a halt when Hurricane Katrina ravages the Gulf Coast. After Evangeline and her family evacuate, their entire town is pulled into the ocean. Tru and Evangeline do find each other again, but love is hard when one has no home. In the years that have passed since Hurricane Katrina, there have been many stories about the immediate devastation to New Orleans. This tale reminds readers that there were millions of people all over the gulf affected by this tragedy and that for many, the horror of the event was only beginning, not ending, when the skies cleared. **Last year's 10th Grade Summer Reading text.**
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## Rising 11th Grade

- **Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller (Fiction)** An unsuccessful traveling salesman finally confronts, in his early sixties, his shattered dreams.
- **The House of Mirth by Edith Wharton (Literary Fiction)** A portrait of American manners and morals at the turn of the century offers the saga of Lily Bart, a beautiful heroine who lacks one requirement for marrying well in New York society--her own money.
- **Othello by William Shakespeare (Fiction)** The destructive effects of jealousy underlie this tale. Othello, a man of quality and superior intelligence, is brought down by his suspicions of his wife, Desdemona.
- **The Elements of Style by William Strunk Jr. (NonFiction)** This style manual offers practical advice on improving writing skills. Throughout, the emphasis is on promoting a plain English style. This little book can help you communicate more effectively by

showing you how to enliven your sentences. **Last year's 11th Grade Summer Reading text.**

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## Rising 12th Grade

- **The Once and Future King by T.H. White (Historical Fantasy)** Merlyn instructs Arthur and his brother Sir Kay in the ways of the world. One of them will need it-- the king has died leaving no heir, and a rightful one must be found by pulling a sword from an anvil resting on a stone. In the second and third parts of the novel, Arthur has become king and the kingdom is threatened from the north. In the final two books, the aging king faces his greatest challenge, when his own son threatens to overthrow him. In *The Book of Merlyn*, Arthur's tutor Merlyn reappears, and teaches him that, even in the face of apparent ruin, there is hope.
- **Frankenstein by Mary Shelley (Gothic Fiction)** Obsessed by creating life itself, Victor Frankenstein plunders graveyards for the material to fashion a new being, which he shocks into life by electricity. But his botched creature, rejected by Frankenstein and denied human companionship, sets out to destroy his maker and all that he holds dear.
- **Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller (Fiction)** An unsuccessful traveling salesman finally confronts, in his early sixties, his shattered dreams.
- **The Book Thief by Markus Zusak (Historical Fiction)** Zusak has created a work that deserves the attention of sophisticated teen and adult readers. Death himself narrates the World War II-era story of Liesel Meminger from the time she is taken, at age nine, to live in Molching, Germany, with a foster family in a working-class neighborhood of tough kids, acid-tongued mothers, and loving fathers who earn their living by the work of their hands. The child arrives having just stolen her first book –although she has not yet learned how to read—and her foster father uses it, *The Gravedigger's Handbook*, to lull her to sleep when she's roused by regular nightmares about her younger brother's death. Across the ensuing years of the late 1930s and into the 1940s, Liesel collects more stolen books as well as a peculiar set of friends: the boy Rudy, the Jewish refugee Max, the mayor's reclusive wife (who has a whole library from which she allows Liesel to steal), and especially her foster parents. Zusak not only creates a mesmerizing and original story but also writes with poetic syntax, causing readers to deliberate over phrases and lines, even as the action impels them forward. Death is not a sentimental storyteller, but he does attend to an array of satisfying details, giving Liesel's story all the nuances of chance, folly, and fulfilled expectation that it deserves. **Last year's 12th Grade Summer Reading text.**