



You've got this.

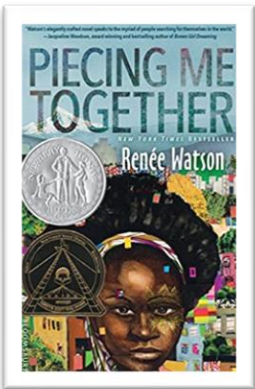
Summer Reading 2020

Saint Mary's School values the joy of reading and learning together. Each year we provide a summer reading list for students to explore, as well as choose a book our school community will read together.

Required reading

This year's required reading selection, *Piecing Me Together*, provides an opportunity for us to reflect on personal values and building empathy and understanding. *Piecing Me Together* has earned many positive reviews and endorsements, as noted in the book's description below. It also comes with a resource guide to assist us leading discussions with students and faculty when we return in the fall.

[Piecing Me Together by Renée Watson. Bloomsbury YA, 2017. ISBN: 978-1681191072](#)



Piecing Me Together won the 2018 Coretta Scott King Author Award and was named a 2018 Newbery Honor Book. The novel deals with issues of identity, self-image, race and gender bias, privilege, and the power of art. Readers will fall in love with real, poignant, and lovely Jade the moment they step into her brilliant, colorful mind, seeing the world as she does in all its beauty and contradictions.

Favorable reviews and endorsements: Newbery Honor and Coretta Scott King Author Award Winner, New York Times bestseller, NPR's Best Books, New York Public Library Best Teen Book of the Year, Chicago Public Library's Best, A School Library Journal Best Book, Kirkus Reviews' Best Teen Books, Josette Frank Award Winner, Association of Independent School Librarians (AISL) Librarians Best Books, Common Sense Media Best Books.

Ninth grade students

During the first weeks of the ninth-grade seminar program this fall, students will focus on identifying their strengths with *StrengthsFinder 2.0*, by Tom Rath. Ninth graders will need to purchase this book for the start of the school year. It can be found at [Amazon](#) or through other online booksellers.

Elective summer reads

For those students looking to read more this summer, please see the list below for books that may be of interest. The list reflects a cross section of books designed to appeal to a large variety of student interest. Our recommendations are curated from a wide array of highly-regarded and reputable organizations, including, The National Coalition of Girls School, School Library Journal, Association of Independent School Librarians Best Books List, Junior Library Guild, and others. These books are also award-winners and garner much prestige in the literary world.

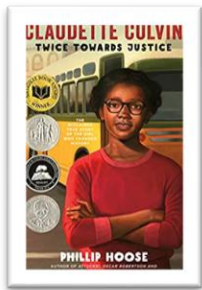
Note: These books reflect a variety of themes and content. We recommend looking over the list as a family and further research content should you deem it necessary.

We wish you all the best and hope your summer is filled with good reading.

Elective Summer Reading 2020

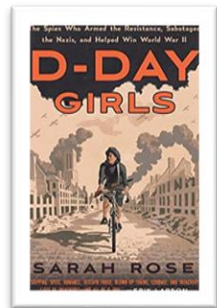
LIGHT READING RECOMMENDATIONS

[*Claudette Colvin : Twice Toward Justice*](#) by Phillip Hoose. Square Fish, 2010. ISBN: 978-0312661052



On March 2, 1955, an impassioned teenager, fed up with the daily injustices of Jim Crow segregation, refused to give her seat to a white woman on a segregated bus in Montgomery, Alabama. Instead of being celebrated as Rosa Parks would be just nine months later, fifteen-year-old Claudette Colvin found herself shunned by her classmates and dismissed by community leaders. Undaunted, a year later she dared to challenge segregation again as a key plaintiff in *Browder v. Gayle*, the landmark case that struck down the segregation laws of Montgomery and swept away the legal underpinnings of the Jim Crow South.

[*D-Day Girls: The Spies Who Armed the Resistance, Sabotaged the Nazis, and Helped Win World War II*](#) by Sarah Rose. Broadway Books, 2020. ISBN: 978-0451495099



In 1942, the Allies were losing, Germany seemed unstoppable, and every able man in England was on the front lines. *D-Day Girls* is dramatic, untold history of the thirty-nine heroic women who were recruited by Britain's elite spy agency, leaving their lives and families to become saboteurs in France, paving the way for an Allied victory in World War II. Gripping. Spies, romance, Gestapo thugs, blown-up trains, courage, and treachery (lots of treachery)—and all of it true.

[*The Downstairs Girl*](#) by Stacey Lee. Putnam, 2019. ISBN: 978-1524740955



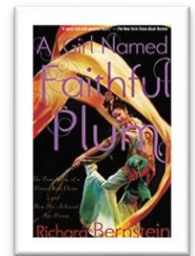
The story of seventeen-year-old Jo Kuan who works by day as a lady's maid for the cruel daughter of one of the wealthiest men in Atlanta. But by night, Jo moonlights as the pseudonymous author of a newspaper advice column for the genteel Southern lady, "Dear Miss Sweetie." When her column becomes wildly popular, she uses the power of the pen to address some of society's ills, but she's not prepared for the backlash that follows when her column challenges fixed ideas about race and gender.

[Five Feet Apart](#) by Rachael Lippincott, Mikki Daughtry, Tobias Laconi. Simon & Schuster, 2018. ISBN: 978-1534437333.



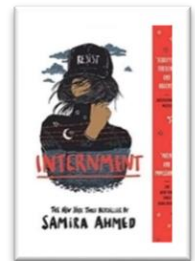
Seventeen-year-old Stella spends most of her time in the hospital as a cystic fibrosis patient. Her life is full of routines, boundaries and self-control -- all of which get put to the test when she meets Will, an impossibly charming teen who has the same illness. There's an instant flirtation, though restrictions dictate that they must maintain a safe distance between them. As their connection intensifies, so does the temptation to throw the rules out the window and embrace that attraction. Can you love someone you can never touch?

[A Girl Named Faithful Plum: The True Story of a Dancer from China and How She Achieved Her Dream](#) by Richard Bernstein. Yearling, 2012. ISBN: 978-0375871580



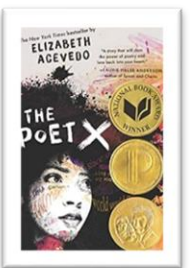
Leaving her poor, remote village in 1978, 11-year-old Zhongmei Li traveled an arduous three-day journey to audition for the Beijing Dance Academy. At the end of the highly competitive seven-stage competition, despite her rural background and lack of connections, she was one of the few girls selected. At the academy, a rigid dormitory supervisor and hostile teacher make life miserable for the young student, but the resolute Zhongmei survives the eight-year training and becomes a successful dancer. Written by her U.S. husband, this biography follows the steely, determined dancer through many adversities up to her academy graduation.

[Internment](#) by Samira Ahmed. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2020. ISBN: 978-0316522700



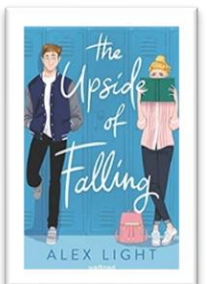
Rebellions are built on hope. Set in a horrifying near-future United States, seventeen-year-old Layla Amin and her parents are forced into an internment camp for Muslim American citizens. With the help of newly made friends also trapped within the internment camp, her boyfriend on the outside, and an unexpected alliance, Layla begins a journey to fight for freedom, leading a revolution against the camp's Director and his guards. Heart-racing and emotional, *Internment* challenges readers to fight complicit silence that exists in our society today.

[The Poet X](#) by Elizabeth Acevedo. Harper Teen, 2018. ISBN: 978-0062662804



This powerful verse novel is narrated by a young Dominican teen in a New York barrio who, repressed by her religious mother, seeks refuge in writing poetry in a journal given to her by her brother Xavier. Xiomara feels imprisoned by her growing body and her emotions that collide. She is protective of her sensitive twin brother who is starting to come out. She has budding romantic feelings for a classmate that she knows would be taboo according to her mother's set of strict rules. Lucky for Xiomara, there is an after-school poetry club that is practicing for the upcoming poetry slam. Is she up for this?

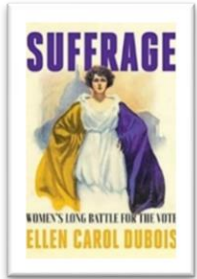
[The Upside of Falling](#) by Alex Light. HarperTeen, 2020. ISBN: 978-0062918055



It has been years since Becca Hart believed in true love, but when her former best friend teases her for not having a boyfriend, Becca lies that she has been talking to someone. Brett Wells is more focused on his future than who to date – even if his friends keep bothering him about it. But when he hears Becca's lie, he decides to step in. It's a perfect decision: friends won't bother him anymore and she has someone to keep up the ruse with. But as they get to know each other, this fake relationship just might blur into something real. While the plot is predictable, the main characters' chemistry and vulnerability help make this teen romance an enjoyable, fun read.

NON-FICTION, TOPICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

[*Suffrage: Women's Long Battle for the Vote*](#) by Ellen Carol DuBois. Simon & Schuster, 2020. ISBN-13: 978-1501165160



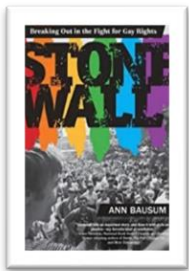
Suffrage honors the 100th anniversary of the 19th amendment to the Constitution. It explores the full scope of the movement to win the vote for women. DuBois follows women's efforts to use their voting rights to win political office, increase their voting strength, and pass laws banning child labor, ensuring maternal health, and securing greater equality for women.

[*Just Mercy \(Adapted for Young Adults\): A True Story of the Fight for Justice*](#) by Bryan Stevenson. Delacorte Press, 2018. ISBN: 978-0525580034



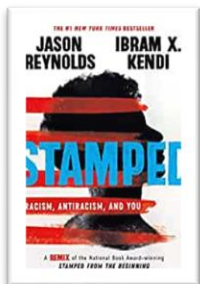
This gripping autobiography tells the story of our broken justice system through one man's efforts to right the wrongs. Bryan Stevenson is a lawyer who has worked for years to get people who have been unjustly imprisoned, sometimes on Death Row, released. Stevenson's story is one of working to protect basic human rights for the most vulnerable people in American society--the poor, the wrongly convicted, and those whose lives have been marked by discrimination and marginalization. A portion of the proceeds of this book will go to charity to help in Stevenson's important work to benefit the voiceless and the vulnerable as they attempt to navigate the broken U.S. justice system.

[*Stonewall: Breaking Out in the Fight for Gay Rights*](#) by Ann Bausum. Speak, 2016. ISBN-13: 978-0147511478



The first history of gay rights for teen readers. In 1969 being gay in the United States was a criminal offense. There were few safe havens. The Stonewall Inn, a Mafia-run, filthy, overpriced bar in New York City's Greenwich Village, was one of them. One hot June night, when cops pounded on the door of the Stonewall tensions were high. The raid became a riot. The riot became a catalyst. The catalyst triggered an explosive demand for gay rights.

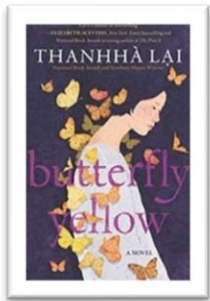
[*Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You: A Remix of the National Book Award-winning Stamped from the Beginning*](#) by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi. Little Brown Books for Young Readers, 2020. ISBN: 978-0316453691.



A timely, crucial, and empowering exploration of racism--and antiracism--in America. "*This is NOT a history book. This is a book about the here and now. A book to help us better understand why we are where we are. A book about race.*" This remarkable reimagining of Dr. Ibram X. Kendi's National Book Award-winning *Stamped from the Beginning* inspires hope for an antiracist future. Told in a casual, conversational, relatable, and sometimes humorous tone, it frames African American history as a history of competing ideas.

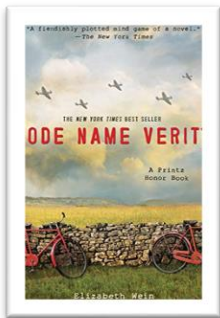
"DEEP DIVE" RECOMMENDATIONS

[Butterfly Yellow](#) by Thanh Hà Lai. HarperCollins, 2019. ISBN: 978-0062229212.



In the final days of the Việt Nam War, Hằng takes her little brother, Linh, to the airport, determined to find a way to safety in America. In a split second, Linh is ripped from her arms—and Hằng is left behind in the war-torn country. Six years later, Hằng has made the brutal journey from Việt Nam and is now in Texas as a refugee. She doesn't know how she will find the little brother who was taken from her until she meets LeeRoy, a city boy with big rodeo dreams, who decides to help her. Hằng is overjoyed when she reunites with Linh. But when she realizes he doesn't remember her, their family, or Việt Nam, her heart is crushed. Though the distance between them feels greater than ever, Hằng has come so far that she will do anything to bridge the gap.

[Code Name Verity](#) by Elizabeth Wein. Hyperion, 2012. ISBN: 978-1423152194



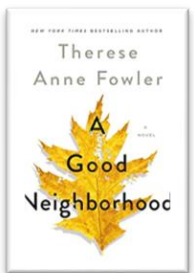
This is a story of friendship, courage and two young enlisted British women during World War II. One is a pilot who transports planes between bases, and the other, her best friend, who has been captured and held as a spy in Nazi-occupied France. Thrilling and frightening, it is a heartbreaking, heartwarming and captivating story.

[Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine: A Novel](#) by Gail Honeyman. Penguin Books, 2018. ISBN: 978-0735220690



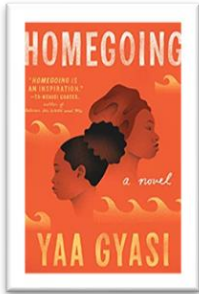
Beautifully written and incredibly funny. *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine* emphasizes the importance of friendship and human connection. Sure, she has no social skills, doesn't have any friends, has weekly abusive calls with her mother, and follows the same, boring schedule day in and day out. But really, she's fine. No one's ever told Eleanor that life should be better than fine. You'll fall in love with Eleanor, an eccentric and regimented loner whose life beautifully unfolds after a chance encounter with a stranger.

[A Good Neighborhood: A Novel](#) by Therese Anne Fowler. St. Martin's Press, 2020. ISBN: 978-1250237279



In Oak Knoll, a verdant, tight-knit North Carolina neighborhood, professor of forestry and ecology Valerie Alston-Holt is raising her bright and talented biracial son, Xavier, who's headed to college in the fall. All is well until the Whitmans—a family with new money and a secretly troubled teenage daughter—raze the house and trees next door to build themselves a showplace. With little in common except a property line, these two families quickly find themselves at odds. : first, over an historic oak tree in Valerie's yard, and soon after, the blossoming romance between their two teenagers. *A Good Neighborhood* asks big questions about life in America today—what does it mean to be a good neighbor? How do we live alongside each other when we don't see eye to eye.

[Homegoing](#) by Yaa Gyasi. Vintage, 2017. ISBN: 978-1101971062



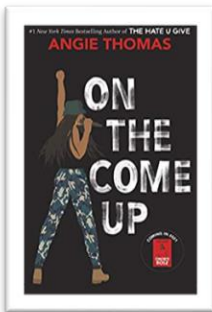
Ghana, eighteenth century: two half-sisters are born into different villages, each unaware of the other. One will marry an Englishman and lead a life of comfort in the palatial rooms of the Cape Coast Castle. The other will be captured in a raid on her village, imprisoned in the very same castle, and sold into slavery. *Homegoing* follows the parallel paths of these sisters and their descendants through eight generations: from the slave traders of the Gold Coast to the plantations of Mississippi, from the Asantes' struggle against British colonialism to the first stirrings of the American Civil War, from the jazz of 20th century Harlem to the sparkling shores of modern Ghana. Yaa Gyasi's extraordinary novel illuminates slavery's troubled legacy both for those who were taken and those who stayed—and shows how the memory of captivity has been inscribed on the soul of our nation.

[I'm Not Dying with You Tonight](#) by Gilly Segal and Kimberly Jones. Sourcebooks Fire, 2019. ISBN: 978-1492678892



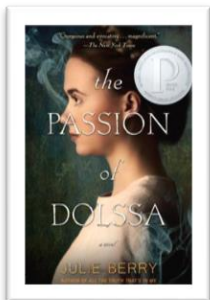
Two high school seniors in Atlanta, Lena and Campbell, one black, one white, must depend on their wits and each other to make it home after fights break out at their school football game and rioting and looting break out in the streets. The girls don't start out as friends, but they have realistic, respectful discussions about racial issues affecting their community as they struggle to understand each other across the same racial divide that's causing all the violence.

[On the Come Up](#) by Angie Thomas. Balzer + Bray, 2019. ISBN: 978-0062498564.



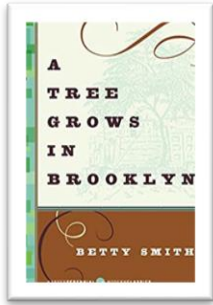
On the Come Up by Angie Thomas (*The Hate U Give*) is a heartfelt and surprisingly humorous coming-of-age novel about 16-year-old aspiring rapper Brianna Jackson. It's set in the same fictional Garden Heights neighborhood of *The Hate U Give*, but Bri is totally different from that story's Starr. Following in her father's hip-hop footsteps, Bri knows she wants to be one of the great rappers of all time and that music could be the answer to her family's money problems. But she didn't know she'd be ON THE COME UP when her first song goes viral for the wrong reasons. Bri quickly learns that fame comes with its own price when the media misinterprets her message and starts to spin everything out of control. Can she find a way to pursue her dream and support her family without ruining her reputation? Although there are tough topics such as racism, gang violence, abandonment, and poverty, there are plenty of positive messages for teens about communication, courage, perseverance, and self-control.

[The Passion of Dolssa](#) by Julie Berry Penguin Books, 2017. ISBN-13: 978-0147512963



Dolssa is a young woman living in 13th century France who speaks regularly with Jesus and is persecuted and pursued by the Church for it. *The Passion of Dolssa*, based on the lives of real 13th century women who were Christian mystics, the Crusades that took place in southern France during that time, and the Inquisition that followed, tells the story of a world not ready for a young woman to speak her truth.

[A Tree Grows in Brooklyn](#) by Betty Smith. Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 1943/2006. ISBN: 978-0061120077



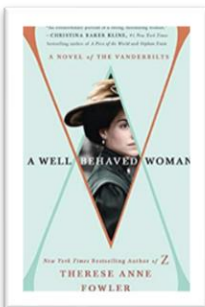
A poignant literary classic that tells the story of Francie Nolan as she grows up in the Williamsburg neighborhood of Brooklyn, NY, from 1902 to 1919. The novel brings to life the world in which Francie lives, yet portrays experiences that kids of any era can relate to -- navigating sibling relationships, making new friends, and discovering first love. It also deals with more serious subjects, such as Francie's father's alcoholism, the death of a loved one, an attempted molestation, and premarital sex causing a ruined reputation. Yet, these issues are seen through the eyes of an innocent young girl and presented in an emotionally authentic way.

[Watch Us Rise](#) by Renee Watson and Ellen Hagan. Bloomsbury YA, 2020. ISBN: 978-1547603114



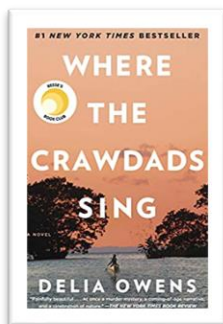
Jasmine and Chelsea are best friends on a mission—they're sick of the way women are treated even at their progressive NYC high school, so they decide to start a Women's Rights Club. They post their work online—poems, essays, videos of Chelsea performing her poetry, and Jasmine's response to the racial microaggressions she experiences—and soon they go viral. But with such positive support, the club is also targeted by trolls. When things escalate in real life, the principal shuts the club down. Not willing to be silenced, Jasmine and Chelsea will risk everything for their voices—and those of other young women—to be heard.

[A Well-Behaved Woman](#) by Therese Anne Fowler, Griffin, 2019. ISBN: 978-1250095480



A Well-Behaved Woman is a riveting novel of iron-willed Alva Smith, her southern family destitute after the Civil War, who married into one of America's great Gilded-Age dynasties: the newly wealthy but socially shunned Vanderbilts. Determined to win respect, she designed and built nine mansions, hosted grand balls, and arranged for her daughter to marry a duke. But Alva also defied convention for women of her time, asserting power within her marriage and becoming a leader in the women's suffrage movement.

[Where the Crawdads Sing](#) by Delia Owens. G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2018. ISBN: 978-0735219090



For years, rumors of the "Marsh Girl" have haunted Barkley Cove, a quiet town on the North Carolina coast. So in late 1969, when handsome Chase Andrews is found dead, the locals immediately suspect Kya Clark, the so-called Marsh Girl. But Kya is not what they say. Sensitive and intelligent, she has survived for years alone in the marsh that she calls home, finding friends in the gulls and lessons in the sand. Then the time comes when she yearns to be touched and loved. When two young men from town become intrigued by her wild beauty, Kya opens herself to a new life—until the unthinkable happens. *Where the Crawdads Sing* is at once an exquisite ode to the natural world, a heartbreaking coming-of-age story, and a surprising tale of possible murder.