

June, 2008

Dear Incoming Students and their Parents:

The English department welcomes you, a member of the class of 2012, to Wheaton Warrenville South High School for your freshman year. We are sure you are both nervous and excited about beginning your high school career this fall, but we also hope you are going to enjoy a restful and renewing summer.

An important goal of the English program is to foster in you an appreciation of literature. As such, part of your summer enjoyment will be an opportunity to read for pleasure. At the bottom of this letter a list of books from which **you must choose one** to read. We put together this list so that each and every incoming freshman could find a book that would appeal to him or her. The list includes popular titles, mysteries, adventure books, real life drama, science fiction, fantasy, and more. If you happen to have already read one of these books, we encourage you to select a different title (maybe even more than one!) to enjoy.

In the fall, on the first day of class, you will receive from your English teacher an assignment that you will complete about the book you chose to read. You will be able to choose from a tri-fold brochure, a book jacket, a poster, or a book review. Each of these assignments will require you to address the following 6 topics: **plot summary, character description, themes or messages, a personal connection to the work, recommendations to others, and 3 important quotes from the book.** The specific assignment criteria, as well as a copy of this letter, is posted on the WW South web page ([www.WWSHS.org](http://www.WWSHS.org)) if you would like some advance information about what you will be asked to do in September. You might want to jot down some notes while you are reading so these ideas are fresh in your mind when you arrive at school on August 19. **This assignment will be due Tuesday, September 2.** Students enrolled in Accelerated Freshman English will receive a separate reading requirement before the end of the school year.

We have notified local libraries and bookstores of the assignment, so you should be able to find the books easily. We look forward to your participation in the school and the English department. Enjoy your reading! ☺

Sincerely,

Sarah Williams  
Freshman Level Leaders

Joanne DiMare

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**Freshman Summer Reading Selections**

Please choose one (or more!) of the following titles as your summer reading choice. Please understand that as these are popular titles, some will contain controversial subject matter and strong language. We encourage parents to read along with their students and discuss all of the ideas and issues in these books. **We do not want any student to read a book that his or her parents would not approve.**

**Mistaken Identity**—Van Ryns and Ceraks (nonfiction)

In this nonfiction account of a horrific car crash involving a van from Taylor University in 2006, Laura Van Ryn, Whitney Cerak and their families were victims of an awful mistake: the wrong girl was identified as the survivor of a car crash that claimed multiple lives. Only after five weeks, when the girl emerged from a coma, was the error discovered. Told in traditional narrative, prayer journals, and passages from the families' blogs, this book is the account of the experiences of these two families and also a personal testimonial of their faith. As the families state in the prologue, "This book is really about how God has sustained two families through His grace."

**Twilight**—Stephanie Meyer (fantasy/romance/suspense)

In this New York Times best-selling novel, readers discover a pair of lovers who are supremely star-crossed. Bella adores beautiful Edward, and he returns her love. But Edward is having a hard time controlling the blood lust she arouses in him, because—he's a vampire. At any moment, the intensity of their relationship could drive him to kill her, but Bella would rather be dead than part from Edward, so she risks her life to stay near him.

**Romiette and Julio**—Sharon M. Draper (multi-cultural)

A contemporary retelling of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet: Julio Montague meets Romiette Cappelle in an Internet chat room when his family moves to Cincinnati to escape from the gangs in his high school. Julio and Romiette discover that not everyone approves of their budding romance. Romiette is African-American and Julio is Hispanic and the Devildogs, a dangerous local gang, oppose their interracial relationship. Soon, the couple find themselves trying to avoid their tragic fate of Shakespeare's famous young lovers.

**Uglies**—Scott Westerfield (science fiction)

In Tally's world, your sixteenth birthday brings an operation that turns you from a repellent ugly into a stunningly attractive pretty and catapults you into a high-tech paradise where your only job is to have a really great time. But Tally's new friend Shay isn't sure she wants to be pretty. She'd rather risk life on the outside. When Shay runs away, Tally learns about a whole new side of the pretty world – and it

isn't very pretty. The authorities offer Tally the worst choice she can imagine: find her friend and turn her in, or never turn pretty at all. The choice Tally makes changes her world forever.

**Sold**—Patricia McCormick (multi-cultural novel)

Lakshmi is a 13-year-old who lives with her family in Nepal. One day her step-father sends her to India to work to support her family. Deceptively, Lakshmi is sent to work in a place called the "Happiness House"; Lakshmi makes the horrible discovery that she has been sold into prostitution. *Sold* takes the reader through the darkest parts of India and exposes what young girls are experiencing as poverty forces them to sell their bodies. Eventually she is faced with making a decision to risk everything for a chance to reclaim her life. **\*This book contains mature subject matter.**

**The Warrior Heir**—Cinda Chima (fantasy)

Before he knew about the Roses, sixteen-year-old Jack lived an unremarkable life in the small Ohio town of Trinity. Only the medicine he takes daily and the thick scar above his heart set him apart from the other high schoolers. Then one day Jack skips his medicine. Suddenly, he is stronger, fiercer, and more confident than ever before—until he loses control of his own strength and nearly kills another player during soccer team tryouts. Soon, Jack learns the startling truth about himself: he is Weirind, part of an underground society of magical people who live among us. As if his bizarre heritage isn't enough, Jack finds out that he's one of the last of the warriors.

**Son of the Mob** – Gordon Korman (mystery/thriller)

Vince Luca is just like any other high school guy except that his father happens to be head of a powerful crime organization. When Vince finds a girl that seems worth the trouble, he finds that she may be the biggest problem of all because her father is an FBI agent---the one who wants to put Vince's father away for good.

**Naughts & Crosses** – Malorie Blackman (thriller)

Callum is a naught, a second-class citizen in a society run by the ruling Crosses. Sephy is a daughter of the man slated to become prime minister. In their world, white naughts and black crosses simply don't mix---and they certainly don't fall in love. But that's exactly what they've done. Now Callum and Sephy meet in secret and make excuses. But excuses no longer cut it when Sephy and her mother are nearly caught in a terrorist bombing planned by the Liberation Militia and Callum's family is linked. Now Callum's father is a prime suspect.

**Nineteen Minutes** – Jodi Picoult (fiction)

On Peter Houghton's first day of kindergarten, he watched helplessly as an older boy ripped his lunch box out of his hands and threw it out the window. From that day on, his life was a series of humiliations, from having his pants pulled down in the cafeteria, to being called a freak at every turn. But can endless bullying justify murder?

**The Boy in the Striped Pajamas**—John Boyne (historical fiction)

This work of historical fiction is set in Poland in 1942 where Bruno, a nine year old German boy, is sent to live with his family at a place he called "Out-With." His father is commandant of a large, fenced in area where a number of people wearing striped pajamas live. Bruno secretly befriends another nine year old boy who lives on the other side of the fence. This is a story of friendship and innocence.

**Over a Thousand Hills I Walk with You** – Hanna Jansen (memoir)

Jeanne, an eight-year old Tutsi, is caught up in the 1994 Rwandan genocide. She witnesses first hand random acts of brutality against those she loves by people she knows. This memoir is the story of one child's survival amidst unspeakable horror, and her ability to create a new life with a new family in a foreign country. Told from both the perspective of eight-year old Jeanne and her adoptive mother, the book draws us into Jeanne's world where we experience through her eyes both betrayal and redemption.

**Maximum Ride** – James Patterson (mystery)

Max, Fang, Iggy, Nudge, the Gasman, and Angel, first introduced to us in James Patterson's *When The Wind Blows*, continues their adventures in *Maximum Ride*. They are pretty normal in most ways---except that they're 98 percent human and 2 percent BIRD. They grew up in a lab in Death Valley, California, living like rats in cages, but now they're free. Aside, of course, from the fact they're prime prey for Erasers---wicked, wolf-like creatures with a taste for flying humans. The mission: to rescue Angel from malicious mutants, infiltrate a secret facility to track down the flock's missing parents, scavenge for sustenance, get revenge on Dad and save the world.

**Players** – Joyce Sweeney (fiction)

Senior captain Corey Brennan knows that this is the year his basketball team has a shot to become all-city champs....when the competitive and mysterious newcomer, Noah, joins the team. Corey struggles....to keep his team together. Adolescent teammate relationships are well depicted in this suspenseful, action-filled novel.

**Sleeping Freshmen Never Lie** – David Lubar (fiction)

A high school Freshman named Scott is experiencing what it's like to be the low man on the totem pole. He doesn't like his classes too much, except for English (of course!). Not surprising, he's a great writer and ends up being a part of the newspaper and is voted into the student council. Meanwhile, while losing some of his old friends and gaining some unlikely new ones, he finds out his mom is pregnant and then decides to write a "survival guide to high school" for the new baby.

**The Glass Castle** –Jeanette Walls (memoir)

Author Jeannette Walls, an MSNBC reporter, doesn't pull any punches opening her memoir by describing spotting her mother on the sidewalk "rooting through a dumpster." Walls' parents are a matched pair of eccentrics; consequently, the Walls children learn to support themselves, eating out of trashcans at school or painting their skin so the holes in their pants don't show. This thoughtful, sensitive memoir details the dysfunctional Walls family while at the same time conveying a positive message of the power of perseverance.