

Summer Reading
Grade 9 – Class of 2023
Downers Grove South High School

Dear Class of 2023 (Grade 9) students,

Below you will find a list of books that you can choose from to fulfill your required summer reading. You must choose one of the books from the Class of 2023 list. When you get back to school in August you will be required to complete a graded assignment in your English class related to your reading. In order to help you prepare for that assignment, we would like to give you a reading focus. No matter which level or which teacher you have in the fall, your summer reading assignment will be based on the reading focus below. Though not required, you may choose to annotate and/or take notes in regards to the reading focus to help you with the assignment you will do in class.

If you would like to find more information on the books, we have listed some sources that you can reference. Not every book will be on every website.

- Barnes & Noble (www.barnesandnoble.com/): offers free access to editorial (professional) reviews for many books.
- Amazon website (www.amazon.com): includes editorial reviews when available and a variety of reader reviews.
- Goodread website (www.goodreads.com/): offers reviews and information about content.
- Common Sense Media website (www.common Sense Media.org/). They do not have every book included, but the ones that are included have a lot of details, including reviews, ratings, and even a section titled, “The parent’s guide to what’s in the book.”

Class of 2023 (Grade 9) Reading Focus:

As you read your selected book from the list, focus on how one of the main characters develops throughout the book and what influences that development. You may want to consider some of the following influences: relationships, adults, peers, events, environments, experiences, moments, obstacles, etc.

Class of 2023 (Grade 9) Book List

***Long Way Down* by Jason Reynolds**

When 15 year old Will’s older brother is gunned down and killed in the streets due to gang violence, Will knows the rules he must follow- no crying, no snitching- get revenge. On his way down in the elevator in his apartment building, Will is met by a character of his past at each floor. Each character was killed by gun violence and will challenge his thinking about how to avenge his brother’s murder.

***Love, Hate, and Other Filters* by Samira Ahmed**

Maya Aziz is an Indian-American Muslim from a small suburb of Chicago who is trying to pursue her dreams and figure out her personal identity within the scope of her cultural traditions and parental expectations. She is a high school senior with a passion for film-making, whose dream is to go to New York University to study film rather than go to college closer to home as her parents wish. She's also trying to manage the conflict between the crush she has on a boy she has known since grade school and the possibility of being paired off with an older Muslim boy her parents deem “suitable.” In the midst of all of this, a terrorist attack brings harsh scrutiny to Muslims across the US, which leads to a personal attack on Maya's family in particular due to their being Muslim and an unfortunate coincidence that links them to the terrorist suspect. Maya’s parents now fear for her safety in the aftermath of the events and Maya struggles to pursue her dreams in response to the chaos around her.

***LIFEL1K3* by Jay Kristoff**

The future is bleak in this sci-fi adventure. America has been devastated by a war between three super-powered corporations. People live in the junk piles of the past, scavenge to survive and piece together technology from the scrap. During a robot gladiator battle, Eve discovers she has telekinetic powers, she is a mutant. As a result, she attracts the attention of a cult that wants to eradicate all mutants, a mysterious man that is trying to save her life, a woman that is trying to kill her, and a bounty hunter. There is tons of action, bounty hunters, robots, artificial intelligence, replicants, car chases through giant sandstorms, and giant, bioengineered monstrosities.

***One of Us is Lying* by Karen McManus**

Five strangers walk into detention and only four walk out alive. Everyone is a suspect, everyone has a secret they are hiding. Learn each character's story as each chapter is told through different eyes and see if you can figure out which one committed murder to protect his or her secret.

***The Girl I Used to Be* by April Henry**

Olivia Reinhart (born Ariel Benson) was only three years old when her mother was killed and everyone believed her father murdered her mother and then left Ariel at a Walmart before disappearing. Fast forward fourteen years, the police tell her that her father's body has been found only about a mile from where her mother's body had previously been discovered. They were both murdered that day, which leaves Olivia as the only survivor—the only witness to her parents' horrific ending. She returns to the town, determined to uncover the truth about how her parents died and who murdered them.

***Tell Me Three Things* by Julie Buxbaum**

This is a story about Jennifer Holmes and her comic, tragic, and romantic happenings. A short time after her mother died, Jennifer's father marries a rich woman – a really rich woman – in Los Angeles. This means Jennifer has to move from Chicago and her best friend into a place that's so different it doesn't even know how to make pizza. She sticks out like a sore thumb, and every other junior in her new, fancy-pants school tells her so. Everyone minus one. One person reaches out to her anonymously on email, and they begin a funny and close relationship that lasts all the way through the year. This anonymous emailer guides Jennifer to socially fulfilling relationships, a more positive self-esteem, and perhaps even love.

***I am the Weapon* by Allen Zadoff**

The mission was simple: kill the mayor of New York City; until he met the mayor's daughter, Sam. A trained assassin, Boy Nobody unassumingly slips in and out of the lives of teenagers with one catch; someone in their life is Boy Nobody's target. With the click of a pen, he can make it look like an untimely death when really it was a targeted kill. When Boy Nobody meets Sam, she is different than anyone else he has met on a mission. Boy Nobody begins to question his purpose and his handlers at The Program. He begins to miss a normal life instead of the fast-paced life of an assassin. This action-packed thriller will keep you on the edge of your seat until the very end.

***Satellite* by Nick Lake**

Now that fifteen-year-old Leo is about to be sixteen, he is finally ready to go back home. Only home for Leo is somewhere he has never been before: Earth. He is one of three teenagers who grew up on the space station named Moon 2. As he floats 250 miles above Earth, Leo yearns to feel gravity, hear an echo, and experience a place he has only read about in encyclopedias. Even though the trip to Earth will be dangerous, Leo cannot help but look forward to the life that awaits him. But as Leo's expectations rise, his life takes an unexpected turn. Written in text-speak, this contemporary science-fiction novel follows Leo's captivating and suspenseful journey to discover the truth about what is really happening on Earth.

***Jackaby* by William Ritter**

Abigail Rook arrives in New Fiddleham, New England in 1892, with no money in her pocket, only the clothes on her back and no prospects in sight. Looking for a place to live and work, she meets R. F. Jackaby, a private detective who can see the supernatural. With a serial killer on the loose, Abigail is thrown headfirst into Jackaby's magical world and the two must solve the case before the body count gets any higher.

***Labyrinth Lost* by Zoraida Cordova**

"Nothing says happy birthday like summoning the spirits of your dead relatives." Alejandra Mortiz comes from a long line of powerful brujas (witches), but she would rather not embrace that destiny. Everyone in Alex's family is ready to celebrate her *Deathday*, also known as her coming-of-age-as-a-bruja day. As the day approaches, Alex decides to rebel and casts a forbidden Canto (spell) that will strip her of her magical abilities. Instead of reversing her magic though, Alex banishes her entire family to Los Lagos, a land in between worlds. With the help of her friends, Alex embarks on a dangerous journey to save her family and make things right.