Summer Reading 2019-2020

9th Grade Honors:
Words Fail Me: What everyone who writes should know about writing by Patricia O'Connor (REQUIRED)
Despite the increase in written communication, the fundamentals of good writing have been lost. Grammar maven Patricia T. O'Conner comes to the rescue with the most painless, practical, and funny writing book ever written. In short, snappy chapters filled with crystal-clear examples, amusing comparisons, and humorous allegories that cover everything from "Pronoun Pileups" and "Verbs That Zing" to "What to Do When You're Stuck," O'Conner provides simple, straightforward tips to help you sort through your thoughts and make your sentences strong.

Fiction Novel: SELECT ONE:

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain
Of all the contenders for the title of The Great American Novel, none has a better claim than The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. Intended at first as a simple story of a boy's adventures in the Mississippi Valley - a sequel to The Adventures of Tom Sawyer - the book grew and matured under Twain's hand into a work of immeasurable richness and complexity. More than a century after its publication, the critical debate over the symbolic significance of Huck's and Jim's voyage is still fresh, and it remains a major work that can be enjoyed at many levels: as an incomparable adventure story and as a classic of American humor. (Contains mature content and language)

The Catcher in the Rye by J.D. Salinger
The hero-narrator of The Catcher in the Rye is an ancient child of sixteen, a native New Yorker named Holden Caulfield. Through circumstances that tend to preclude adult, secondhand description, he leaves his prep school in Pennsylvania and goes underground in New York City for three days. The boy himself is at once too simple and too complex for us to make any final comment about him or his story. Perhaps the safest thing we can say about Holden is that he was born in the world not just strongly attracted to beauty but, almost, hopelessly impaled on it. There are many voices in this novel: children's voices, adult voices, underground voices - but Holden's voice is the most eloquent of all. Transcending his own vernacular, yet remaining marvelously faithful to it, he issues a perfectly articulated cry of mixed pain and pleasure. However, like most lovers and clowns and poets of the higher orders, he keeps most of the pain to, and for, himself. The pleasure he gives away, or sets aside, with all his heart. It is there for the reader who can handle it to keep.

Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe
A simple story of a "strong man" whose life is dominated by fear and anger, Things Fall Apart is written with remarkable economy and subtle irony. Uniquely and richly African, at the same time it reveals Achebe's keen awareness of the human qualities common to men of all times and places.

The Bean Trees by Barbara Kingsolver
Clear-eyed and spirited, Taylor Greer grew up poor in rural Kentucky with the goals of avoiding pregnancy and getting away. But when she heads west with high hopes and a barely functional car, she meets the human condition head-on. By the time Taylor arrives in Tucson, Arizona, she has acquired a completely unexpected child, a three-year-old American Indian girl named Turtle, and must somehow come to terms with both motherhood and the necessity for putting down roots. Hers is a story about love and friendship, abandonment and belonging, and the discovery of surprising resources in apparently empty places.
10th Grade Honors:

Woe Is I: The Grammarphobe's Guide to Better English in Plain English by Patricia T. O'Conner (REQUIRED)
The bestselling grammar book has been updated and revised to include the latest and greatest on the basics and subtleties of English, and features a new chapter on the language of the Internet.

Fiction Novel: SELECT ONE:

In the Time of Butterflies by Julia Alvarez
Set during the waning days of the Trujillo dictatorship in the Dominican Republic in 1960, this extraordinary novel tells the story the Mirabal sisters, three young wives and mothers who are assassinated after visiting their jailed husbands.

All Quiet on the Western Front by Erich Maria Remarque
This is the testament of Paul Bäumer, who enlists with his classmates in the German army of World War I. These young men become enthusiastic soldiers, but their world of duty, culture, and progress breaks into pieces under the first bombardment in the trenches. Through years of vivid horror, Paul holds fast to a single vow: to fight against the hatred that meaninglessly pits young men of the same generation but different uniforms against one another – if only he can come out of the war alive.

Life of Pi by Yann Martel
Life of Pi is a fantasy adventure novel by Yann Martel published in 2001. The protagonist, Piscine Molitor "Pi" Patel, a Tamil boy from Pondicherry, explores issues of spirituality and practicality from an early age. He survives 227 days after a shipwreck while stranded on a boat in the Pacific Ocean with a Bengal tiger named Richard Parker.

Siddhartha by Hermann Hesse
Herman Hesse's classic novel has delighted, inspired, and influenced generations of readers, writers, and thinkers. In this story of a wealthy Indian Brahmin who casts off a life of privilege to seek spiritual fulfillment. Hesse synthesizes disparate philosophies--Eastern religions, Jungian archetypes, Western individualism--into a unique vision of life as expressed through one man's search for true meaning.