

## English Department

All students are to read over the summer in preparation for the start of the new school year. Teachers selected these books to interest students and to enrich their literary background. The Belmont Public Library will receive copies of this list. If at all possible, students should purchase copies of their summer reading books so that they can mark them up and use them at the start of school. Summaries below are excerpted from bn.com.

### *Entering Freshmen*

Entering freshmen taking honors English (9H) or World Experience (H) should read *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas.

Entering freshmen taking college preparatory English (9CP) should choose one book to read from a **choice of four novels**, listed below with publisher's summaries.

#### ***Pop*, by Gordon Korman**

New to town, Marcus spends the summer before his junior year practicing football alone at a local park hoping to meet someone from the high school team. Instead, he meets an eccentric middle-aged man named Charlie who teaches Marcus more about football, tackling, and the art of the "pop" than he could have imagined, and the two strike up an unusual friendship... Gradually, Marcus figures out that Charlie is an ex-NFL star hiding a secret. Despite the obstacles, he is determined to help his friend.

**This might be the book for you if you like** football, characters who are great athletes, and themes of persistence, overcoming obstacles, and friendship.

#### ***The Hate U Give*, by Angie Thomas**

Sixteen-year-old Starr Carter moves between two worlds: the poor neighborhood where she lives and the fancy suburban prep school she attends. The uneasy balance between these worlds is shattered when Starr witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend Khalil at the hands of a police officer. Khalil was unarmed. Soon afterward, his death is a national headline. Some are calling him a thug, maybe even a drug dealer and a gangbanger. Protesters are taking to the streets in Khalil's name... What everyone wants to know is: what **really** went down that night? And the only person alive who can answer that is Starr. But what Starr does—or does not—say could upend her community. It could also endanger her life.

**This might be the book for you if you like** current events, drama, strong female role models, and themes of resilience, social justice, and perspective-taking.

#### ***Speak*, by Laurie Halse Anderson**

Divided into the four marking periods of an academic year, the novel, narrated by Melinda Sordino, begins on her first day as a high school freshman. No one will sit with Melinda on the bus. At school, students call her names and harass her; her best friends from junior high scatter to different cliques and abandon her... A girl at a school pep rally offers an explanation of the heroine's pariah status when she confronts Melinda about calling the police at a summer party, resulting in several arrests. But readers do not learn why Melinda made the call until much later... Only through her work in art class, and with the support of a compassionate teacher there, does she begin to reach out to others and eventually find her voice.

**This might be the book for you if you like** art, characters who face real-life teenage issues like bullying, and themes of fear, courage, identity, friendship, and trust.

### ***Cemetery Boys*, by Aiden Thomas**

Yadriel is a gay, trans, 16-year-old boy in California, and when Yadriel’s traditional Latinx family is unwilling to accept his gender, he takes it upon himself to prove that he is a true brujo (sorcerer) by secretly performing the sacred initiation rite ritual with his cousin, Maritza. However, what he doesn’t count on is summoning the ghost of his classmate who doesn’t even know he’s dead – or how he died. A romantic mystery as poignant as it is spellbinding, the novel weaves in a mosaic of culture, acceptance, and identity, where intricately crafted characters are the pieces and love—platonic, romantic, familial, and communal—is the glue.

**This might be the book for you if you like** fantasy, exploring Latinx culture, emotional vulnerability, and topics like LGBTQ+ acceptance, deportation, colonization, and racism within authoritative establishments.

### ***Entering Sophomores***

Entering sophomores taking English 10CP should read **one novel from the list** below.

**Nicola Yoon:** *The Sun is Also a Star*  
**Samira Ahmed:** *Love, Hate, and Other Filters*  
**Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely:** *All American Boys*  
**Celeste Ng:** *Little Fires Everywhere*  
**Julia Alvarez:** *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*  
**Uzodinma Iweala:** *Speak No Evil*  
**Khaled Hosseini:** *Kite Runner*

Students taking English 10H should read **two novels from the list** below.

**Khaled Hosseini:** *Kite Runner* or *And the Mountains Echoed*  
**Amy Tan:** *Kitchen God's Wife*  
**Jhumpa Lahiri:** *Interpreter of Maladies* or *Unaccustomed Earth*  
**Julia Alvarez:** *In the Time of the Butterflies* or *How the Garcia Girls Lost their Accent*  
**Isabel Allende:** *House of the Spirits* or *Daughter of Fortune*  
**Chimamanda Adichie:** *The Purple Hibiscus*  
**Uzodinma Iweala:** *Speak No Evil*  
**Celeste Ng:** *Little Fires Everywhere*

### ***Entering Juniors***

**All entering juniors should read *A Mind Spread Out on the Ground* by Alicia Elliot.** Please note: The essay titled “On Forbidden Rooms and Intentional Forgetting” connects surviving colonization and surviving sexual violence. Though the chapter is not at all graphic, the content may be triggering and can be skipped.

**As an option, students may additionally choose a book to read from the [American Literature Summer Reading list](#).**

### ***Entering Seniors***

**All entering seniors should read *The Things They Carried* by Tim O’Brien.**

**All 12CP and 12H students should read and annotate (in the margins or on sticky notes) the text for details about story-truth, happening-truth, memory, and anything else that sparks their interest. In addition, students should**

brainstorm 5-10 topics or questions they may wish to research over the course of the year. Topics can range from issues of social justice to an academic area of focus to an outside interest.

**All seniors entering 12H** must also listen to the Radiolab podcast "[Limits of the Mind](#)," and make one page of notes about memory (noting the time elapsed to mark the spot in the podcast) as well as anything else that sparks interest.

**All students entering 12AP** select at least two books to read over the summer as preparation for the senior English thesis. Each senior also identified a back-up book to read if the first book proves uninteresting. A record of these titles is on file with the English Department. Those seniors entering English 12AP should read and annotate (in the margins or on sticky notes) at least those selected books for their senior thesis by the start of school in the fall; many graduates have suggested that entering seniors read as many thesis books as possible over the summer before the start of senior year.