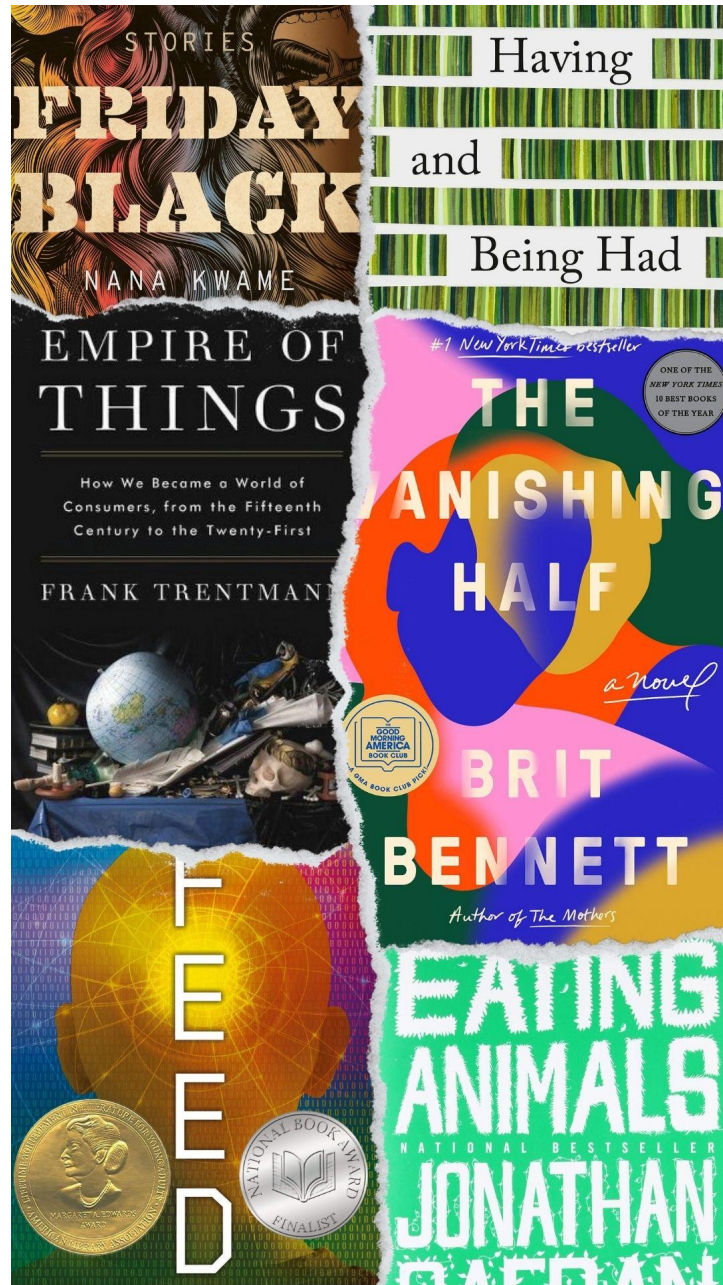


AIM Academy Upper School



2021 Summer Work

Overview

Rationale: Students complete summer work to avoid **summer slide**, an academic phenomenon that describes the “slide backward” of reading and math skills students experience over the summer when they are away from the classroom.

Nuts and Bolts: AIM Academy Upper School students need to complete work in the areas of reading, writing, and math. Students can satisfy summer work requirements in a few ways. They can complete the independent work assigned here (the Humanities Enrichment Project) and the appropriate math packet, or they can attend AIM’s Summer programming. **Attendance in the summer program exempts students** from needing to complete the summer reading and writing work and/or the summer math packet. **Students going into an Honors ELA class must complete the required Honors Summer Reading** in addition to whichever path they choose from below.

	Humanities Requirements	Math Requirements
Independent	Summer Humanities Enrichment Project	Summer Math Packet
Teacher-supported	AIM Summer Seminar Program	AIM Summer Math Maintenance
Teacher-supported	AIM Summer ACT Prep	

Option 1 (Fully Independent): Complete both the Humanities Project **and** the Math Packet.

Option 2 (Fully Supported): Attend both the AIM Seminar Program **and** the Math Maintenance Program.

Option 3 (Mixed Support): Attend the AIM Seminar Program **and** complete the Math Packet.

Option 4 (Mixed Support): Complete the Humanities Project **and** attend the Math Maintenance Program.

Option 5 (Alternate Path for Rising Juniors): Complete the AIM Summer ACT Program (this satisfies all reading, writing, and math requirements).

Summer Theme: Consumption

Should I buy this or should I buy that? Should I wear this or wear that? Do this or do that? Eat this or eat that? We make these decisions again and again in our daily lives. We are all consumers. Air, water, food, clothing, shelter, transportation, products, services, goods, entertainment, information, digital platforms... in 2021, it's often hard to view anything we interact with outside the lens of consumption.

This summer, we are asking the students in the Upper School to explore this complicated paradigm and ask themselves these questions: How can we make more informed decisions about what we consume? What are the consequences of our consumer behaviors? For ourselves? For our community? For our planet? How can we become empowered consumers? What is our current role in the world of consumption, and what do we want it to be?

Humanities Enrichment Project

The full project is outlined below. More in-depth instructions follow.

Components for completion:

- 1) **READ.** Choose ONE of the books from the reading list to read (listening on Audible or Learning Ally is fine too)

- 2) **WRITE.** Write a blog. You must have five entries.
 - a) Real World Connection (research/analytical writing)
 - b) Sensory description (creative writing)
 - c) Book Review (evaluative writing)
 - d) Memoir (narrative writing)
 - e) Photojournalism (see the "Do" below)

- 3) **DO.** Track your consumption in a single category and take (at least) ten pictures along the way. Post your photojournalism to your blog. Make sure to add short descriptions of what you are photographing and follow up with a reflection of the entire experience (more details below).

Book Choices

1. [Feed, M.T. Anderson](#)

- **Genre:** Dystopian Fiction
- **What it's about:** For Titus and his friends, it started out like any ordinary trip to the moon — a chance to party during spring break. But that was before the crazy hacker caused all their feeds to malfunction, sending them to the hospital to lie around with nothing inside their heads for days. And it was before Titus met Violet, a beautiful, brainy teenage girl who has decided to fight the feed and its ever-present ability to categorize human thoughts and desires. M. T. Anderson's not-so-brave new world is a smart, savage satire that has captivated readers with its view of an imagined future that veers unnervingly close to the here and now.
- **Good for:** Dystopian lovers and futurists
- **You should know:** *Feed* includes sex scenes and descriptions of violence.
- **Excerpt:** It was maybe, okay, maybe it was like two days after the party with the "never pukes when he chugalugs" that Violet chatted me first thing in the morning and said she was working on a brand-new project. I asked her what was the old project, and she was like, did I want to see the new one? I said, Okay, should I come over to su casa? I've never been there, and she was like, No, not yet. Let's meet at the mall.

I was like, Okay, sure, fine, whatever swings your string, and she was all, Babycakes, you swing my string, which is a nice thing for someone to say to you, especially before you use mouthwash.

So I flew over to the mall near her house through the rain, which was coming down outside in this really hard way. Everyone had on all their lights until they got above the clouds. Up there it was sunny, and people were flying very businesslike.

The mall was really busy, there were a lot of crowds there. They were buying all this stuff, like the inflatable houses for their kids, and the dog massagers, and the tooth extensions that people were wearing, the white ones which you slid over your real teeth and they made your mouth just like one big single tooth going all the way across.

Violet was standing near the fountain and she had a real low shirt on, to show off her lesion, because the stars of the Oh? Wow! Thing! had started to get lesions, so now people were thinking better about lesions, and lesions even looked kind of cool. Violet looked great in her low shirt, and besides that she was smiling, and really excited for her idea.

- **Page Count:** 299 pages

2. [*Friday Black*](#), Nana Kwame Adjei-Brenyah

- **Genre:** Short Story Collection
- **What it's about:** From the start of this extraordinary debut, Nana Kwame Adjei-Brenyah's writing will grab you, haunt you, enrage and invigorate you. By placing ordinary characters in extraordinary situations, Adjei-Brenyah reveals the violence, injustice, and painful absurdities that black men and women contend with every day in this country. These stories tackle urgent instances of racism and cultural unrest, and explore the many ways we fight for humanity in an unforgiving world. In "The Finkelstein Five," Adjei-Brenyah gives us an unforgettable reckoning of the brutal prejudice of our justice system. In "Zimmer Land," we see a far-too-easy-to-believe imagining of racism as sport. And "Friday Black" and "How to Sell a Jacket as Told by Ice King" show the horrors of consumerism and the toll it takes on us all.
- **Good for:** Short story lovers and those looking to unpack racial and social inequities
- **You should know:** *Friday Black* includes descriptions of violence.
- **Excerpt:** On verdict day, Emmanuel's family and friends of many different races and backgrounds had gathered together and watched a television tuned to a station that had sympathised with the children, who were popularly known as the Finkelstein Five. Pizza and drinks were served. When the ruling was announced, Emmanuel felt a clicking and grinding in his chest. It burned. His mother, known to be one of the liveliest and happiest women in the neighborhood, threw a plastic cup filled with Coke across the room. When the plastic fell and the soda splattered, the people stared at Emmanuel's mother. Seeing Mrs Gyan that way meant it was real: they'd lost. Emmanuel's father walked away from the group wiping his eyes, and Emmanuel felt the grinding in his chest settle to a cold nothingness. On the ride home, his father cursed. His mother punched honks out of the steering wheel. Emmanuel breathed in and watched his hands appear, then disappear, then appear, then disappear as they rode past streetlights. He let the nothing he was feeling wash over him in one cold wave after another.

But now that he'd been called in for an interview with Stich's, a store self-described as an 'innovator with a classic sensibility' that specialized in vintage sweaters, Emmanuel had something to think about besides the bodies of those kids, severed at the neck, growing damp in thick, pulsing, shooting blood. Instead, he thought about what to wear.

In a vague move of solidarity, Emmanuel climbed into the loose-fitting cargoes he'd worn on a camping trip. Then he stepped into his patent-leather Space Jams with the laces still clean and taut as they weaved up all across the black tongue. Next, he pulled out a long-ago abandoned black hoodie and dove into its tunnel. As a final act of solidarity, Emmanuel put on a gray snapback cap, a hat similar to the ones two of

the Finkelstein Five had been wearing the day they were murdered—a fact George Wilson Dunn's defense had stressed throughout the proceedings.

Emmanuel stepped outside into the world, his Blackness at a solid 7.6. He felt like Evel Knievel at the top of a ramp.

- **Page Count:** 208 pages

3. [*Eating Animals*](#), Jonathan Safran Foer

- **Genre:** Memoir/ Journalism
- **What it's about:** Bestselling author Jonathan Safran Foer spent much of his life oscillating between enthusiastic carnivore and occasional vegetarian. For years he was content to live with uncertainty about his own dietary choices but once he started a family, the moral dimensions of food became increasingly important. Faced with the prospect of being unable to explain why we eat some animals and not others, Foer set out to explore the origins of many eating traditions and the fictions involved with creating them. Traveling to the darkest corners of our dining habits, Foer raises the unspoken question behind every fish we eat, every chicken we fry, and every burger we grill.
- **Good for:** Activists and lovers of investigative journalism
- **Excerpt:** We took the puppy home. I hugged it - her - from across the room. Then, because it - she - gave me reason to think I wouldn't lose digits in the process, I graduated to feeding her from my palm. Then I let her lick my hand. And then I let her lick my face. And then I licked her face. And now I love all dogs and will live happily ever after.

Sixty-three percent of American households have at least one pet. This prevalence is most impressive because of its newness. Keeping companion animals became common only with the rise of the middle class and urbanization, perhaps because of the deprivation of other contact with animals, or simply because pets cost money and are therefore a signifier of extravagance (Americans spend \$34 billion on their companion animals every year). Oxford historian Sir Keith Thomas, whose encyclopedic work *Man and the Natural World* is now considered a classic, argues that

the spread of pet-keeping among the urban middle classes in the early modern period is ... a development of genuine social, psychological, and indeed commercial importance. ... It also had intellectual implications. It encouraged the middle classes to form optimistic conclusions about animal intelligence; it gave rise to innumerable anecdotes about animal sagacity; it stimulated the notion that animals could have character and individual

personality; and it created the psychological foundation for the view that some animals at least were entitled to moral consideration.

It wouldn't be right to say that my relationship with George has revealed to me the "sagacity" of animals. Beyond her most basic desires, I don't have the faintest clue what's going on in her head. (Although I have become convinced that much, beyond basic desires, is going on.) I'm surprised by her lack of intelligence as often as I'm surprised by her intelligence. The differences between us are always more present than the similarities.

- **Page Count:** 368 pages

4. [*Having and Being Had*](#), Eula Biss

- **Genre:** Essay Collection
- **What it's about:** "My adult life can be divided into two distinct parts," Eula Biss writes, "the time before I owned a washing machine and the time after." Having just purchased her first home, the poet and essayist now embarks on a provocative exploration of the value system she has bought into. Through a series of engaging exchanges—in libraries and laundromats, over barstools and backyard fences—she examines our assumptions about class and property and the ways we internalize the demands of capitalism. Described by the New York Times as a writer who "advances from all sides, like a chess player," Biss offers an uncommonly immersive and deeply revealing new portrait of work and luxury, of accumulation and consumption, of the value of time and how we spend it. Ranging from IKEA to Beyoncé to Pokemon, Biss asks, of both herself and her class, "In what have we invested?"
- **Good for:** Social critics and keen observers
- **Excerpt:** What does it say about capitalism, John asks, that we have money and want to spend it but we can't find anything worth buying? We're on our way home from a furniture store, again. We almost bought something called a credenza, but then John opened the drawers and discovered that it wasn't made to last.

I think there are limits, I say, to what mass production can produce.

We just bought a house but we don't have furniture yet. We've been eating on our back stoop for three months. Last week a Mexican woman with four children rang our doorbell and asked if our front room was for rent. I'm sorry, I said awkwardly, we live here. She was confused. But, she said, it's empty.

It is empty. I hang curtains to hide the emptiness, but it remains empty. There wasn't any furniture in the house where I grew up until a German cabinetmaker moved in with us. He arrived in a truck so heavy that it made a dent in the driveway. He filled our dining room with his furniture and then he made tiny replicas of that

furniture with the machines he brought in the truck. I still have the tiny corner cabinet with lattice doors, the tiny hutch with brass knobs, and the tiny dining room table with expertly turned legs. They're in the basement, wrapped in newspaper. The tiny dresser sits atop my dresser, which is from IKEA.

- **Page Count:** 336 pages

5. [*The Vanishing Half*](#), Brit Bennett

- **Genre:** Literary Fiction
- **What it's about:** The Vignes twin sisters will always be identical. But after growing up together in a small, southern black community and running away at age sixteen, it's not just the shape of their daily lives that is different as adults, it's everything: their families, their communities, their racial identities. Many years later, one sister lives with her black daughter in the same southern town she once tried to escape. The other secretly passes for white, and her white husband knows nothing of her past. Still, even separated by so many miles and just as many lies, the fates of the twins remain intertwined. What will happen to the next generation, when their own daughters' storylines intersect? Weaving together multiple strands and generations of this family, from the Deep South to California, from the 1950s to the 1990s, Brit Bennett produces a story that is at once a riveting, emotional family story and a brilliant exploration of the American history of passing. Looking well beyond issues of race, *The Vanishing Half* considers the lasting influence of the past as it shapes a person's decisions, desires, and expectations, and explores some of the multiple reasons and realms in which people sometimes feel pulled to live as something other than their origins.
- **Good for:** Fiction lovers and fans of multigenerational narratives
- **You should know:** *The Vanishing Half* includes sex scenes.
- **Excerpt:** He stooped to kiss her cheek, and in the mirror, she watched his fair head bend over her dark one. Did she look as nervous as she felt? Would anybody be able to tell? A colored family in the neighborhood. Blake was right, it would never happen. The Association would put a stop to it. They had lawyers on hand for such a thing, didn't they? What was the purpose of having an Association if not to stop undesirables from moving in, if not to ensure the neighborhood exist precisely as the neighbors wished? She tried to steady that flutter in her stomach but she couldn't. She'd been caught before. Only once, the second time she'd ever pretended to be white. During her last summer in Mallard, weeks after venturing into the charm shop, she'd gone to the South Louisiana Museum of Art on an ordinary Saturday morning, not Negro Day, and walked right up to the main entrance, not the side door where Negroes lined up in the alley. Nobody stopped her, and again, she'd felt stupid for not trying this sooner. There was nothing to being white except boldness. You could convince anyone you belonged somewhere if you acted like you did.

In the museum, she'd glided slowly through the rooms, studying the fuzzy Impressionists. She was listening distractedly as an elderly docent intoned to a circle of listless children, when she noticed a Negro security guard in the corner of the room staring. Then he'd winked, and horrified, she rushed past him, head down, barely breathing until she stepped back into the bright morning. She rode the bus back to Mallard, her face burning. Of course passing wasn't that easy. Of course that colored guard recognized her. We always know our own, her mother said.

And now a colored family moving across the street. Would they see her for what she was? Or rather, what she wasn't?

- **Page Count:** 480 pages

6. [Empire of Things, Frank Trentmann](#)

- **Genre:** Nonfiction History
- **What it's about:** In *Empire of Things*, Frank Trentmann unfolds the extraordinary story of our modern material world, from Renaissance Italy and late Ming China to today's global economy. While consumption is often portrayed as a recent American export, this monumental and richly detailed account shows that it is in fact a truly international phenomenon with a much longer and more diverse history. Trentmann traces the influence of trade and empire on tastes, as formerly exotic goods like coffee, tobacco, Indian cotton, and Chinese porcelain conquered the world, and explores the growing demand for home furnishings, fashionable clothes, and convenience that has transformed private and public life.
- **Good for:** History buffs and lovers of nonfiction
- **You should know:** *Empire of Things* is a longer read, so this would be an excellent Audible choice.
- **Excerpt:** We live surrounded by things. A typical German owns 10,000 objects. In Los Angeles, a middle-class garage often no longer houses a car but several hundred boxes of stuff. The United Kingdom in 2013 was home to 6 billion items of clothing, roughly a hundred per adult; a quarter of these never leave the wardrobe. Of course, people always had things, and used them not only to survive but for ritual, display and fun. But the possessions in a pre-modern village or an indigenous tribe pale when placed next to the growing mountain of things in advanced societies like ours.

This change in accumulation involved a historic shift in humans' relations with things. In contrast to the pre-modern village, where most goods were passed on and arrived as gifts or with the wedding trousseau, things in modern societies are mainly bought in the marketplace. And they pass through our lives more quickly.

In the last few hundred years, the acquisition, flow and use of things – in short, consumption – has become a defining feature of our lives. It would be a mistake to think people at any time have had a single identity, but there have been periods when certain roles have been dominant, defining a society and its culture. In Europe, the High Middle Ages saw the rise of a 'chivalrous society' of knights and serfs.

The Reformation pitched one faith against another. In the nineteenth century, a commercial society gave way to an industrial class society of capitalists and wage workers. Work remains important today, but it defines us far less than in the heyday of the factory and the trade union. Instead of warriors or workers, we are more than ever before consumers.

- **Page Count:** 880

Writing Requirements

You must host your writing in a blog space. Any of the sites below will do.

[Wix](#)

[Blogger](#)

[Wordpress](#)

You must include the following entries. You can certainly add *more*, but these five entries are required.

1. **Real World Connection** (research/analytical writing)

Taking inspiration from the book you chose to read, research one facet of “consumption” in the real world. Present your research in an analytical essay that explores your chosen topic. **Research writing has these**

characteristics:

- An objective, third-person voice
- Methodical presenting of facts
- A range of sources, all of which are cited

2. **Sensory description** (creative writing)

Choose consumable products (food, health and beauty products, music, social media, news, material goods) and paint a picture for the reader using sensory description and imagery. **Creative writing has these**

characteristics:

- A unique and/or personal voice
- Description that taps into the five senses
- Use of figurative language (e.g., simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, allusion)

3. **Book review** (evaluative writing)

Decide whether or not you enjoyed the book you chose and write a review. A book review evaluates a book’s merit based on criteria that is largely up to the critic! **A book review has these characteristics:**

- An opinion on whether or not the book was “good”
- Criteria for what made the book enjoyable or not
- Specific examples of the presence or absence of the criteria spelled out by the critic

4. **Consumer memoir** (narrative writing)

We consume things all day, every day and, for better or worse, our consuming behaviors often form the basis for important rituals and memories: birthday

presents, christmas trees, Thanksgiving dinner, prom dresses, soccer cleats, a first car, a nightly self-care routine, water ice on the boardwalk, a collar for your new puppy, flowers from a friend. Choose one “consumer memory” and write about it. **Narrative writing has these characteristics:**

- A beginning, middle, and end
- Setting and characters
- Action and/or dialogue

5. Photojournalism (The “Do” Entry)

It wouldn't be right to read and write about consumption without actually tracking the way we each personally behave as consumers. The last component of your summer work requires you to track each and every item you consume in a given category. As you do that, take pictures (at least ten to be exact). Use your pictures to “tell the story.” [More details about this component of the summer work is below.](#) **Photojournalism has these characteristics:**

- Photographs (at least ten here)
- Photographs that are presented in a way that “tells a story”
- Captions to add a small narration to what the pictures reveal

Do: Track Your Consumption

Choose a consumable category from this list:

- Food
- Health and Beauty Products
- Music
- Social Media
- News
- Material Goods (purchased items for personal use)

Track your consumption of **all** items in this category over the course of one week using the following methods:

- A table with every single instance of consumption (example below)

Date	Time	Item
June 10	8:30am	Cheerios and Milk
June 10	9:15am	Starbucks Frappuccino
June 10	10:00am	Wawa Sizzli
June 10	2:15pm	Bowl of Cheez-Its

- At least ten photos or screenshots demonstrating your consuming habits

Reflect on the following aspects of your consuming behavior:

1. How much did you consume? Was it more or less than you expected?
2. What kind of things did you consume? Was there variability in your consumption or do you tend to consume the same kinds of things over and over?
3. How did your consumption make you feel?
4. Did tracking your consumption make you want to change your behavior? If so, in what ways?