



## ST. MARK'S SCHOOL

### Required and Elective Reading -- Summer 2021

May 27, 2021

Dear St. Mark's Families,

We believe strongly in the goal of maintaining intellectual engagement in the summertime. Our standard advice to students is *not* to preview material and study ahead for upcoming courses. In some cases, it may be necessary to pursue enrichment and reinforce topics covered in the previous year. We hope that *all* students will prioritize reading widely and pursuing activities rooted in curiosity. Summer is an ideal time for interests that students may not have enough time and space to explore during the school year, and to pick up new ideas and projects. Ultimately, this is the foundation upon which we build a community of lifelong learners.

At St. Mark's, we are committed to doing the work of creating a more just, global society, and look forward to unpacking the complexities of systemic racism, COVID-19, and many more challenging issues together this fall in thoughtful dialogue. We offer this curated list of required and elective resources to our students to push them to consider how they might contribute to these conversations, and also find a selection or two (or ten) to add to their own bookshelves or e-readers this summer.

Please complete the required reading and viewing prior to your return to school so that our discussions in advisories and house spaces can build on this common foundation.

Here's to a healthy and productive summer. I wish you happy learning!

Sincerely,  
Nat Waters  
Dean of Academics

## Required Reading and Viewing

In the coming year, we will explore together our obligations to one another in an antiracist community, and our role as citizens in a just, global society. Before school begins this fall, all students and faculty should watch and read this short collection of clips and articles that we will use to inform our conversations.

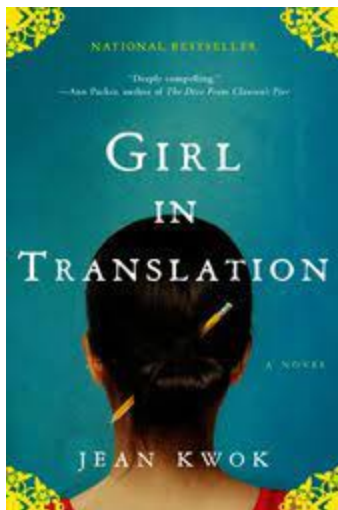
- Chimamanda Ngoze Adiche: [\*The Danger of a Single Story\*](#) (TED Talk, 2009)
- Jhumpa Lahiri: [\*Excerpt from My Two Lives\*](#) (via *Facing History and Ourselves*, 2007).
- Bryan Stevenson: [\*The Power of Proximity\*](#) (CEO Initiative, 2018).

In addition, we will have required reads for **all US History Students** (Advanced US History and US History), and next year's Third Form (Class of 2025).

## Required Third Form Text (Choose One)

In addition to the selections above, all incoming Third Form students should read one of the following texts prior to their arrival on campus. As a part of extended Orientation, members of the Third Form will be engaged in book groups with peers who read their selection, and will make connections to the texts within their Global Seminar course.

**Jean Kwok, [\*Girl in Translation\*](#)**



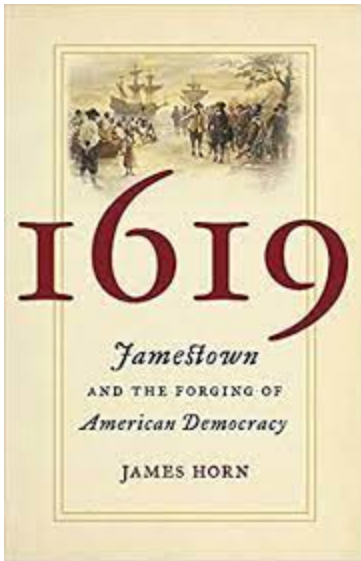
**“Introducing a fresh, exciting Chinese-American voice, *Girl in Translation* is an inspiring debut about a young immigrant in America, a smart girl who, living a double life between school and sweatshop, understands that her family’s future is in her hands.** (via Author’s Website)

**Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely, [\*All American Boys\*](#)**



**“Critically acclaimed authors Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely have joined forces to write an explosive new novel, *ALL AMERICAN BOYS*, inspired by recent controversial events and the national firestorm over police brutality. ‘As a black man and a white man, both writers and educators, we came together to cowrite a book about how systemic racism and police brutality affect the lives of young people in America, in order to create an important, unique, and honest work that would give young people and the people who educate them a tool for talking about these difficult but absolutely vital conversations,’ said Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely.”** (via Author’s Website)

All US History Students will read prior to the opening of school in the fall:



## 1619: Jamestown and the Forging of American Democracy

The essential history of the extraordinary year in which American democracy and American slavery emerged hand in hand in colonial Virginia.

“Along the banks of the James River, Virginia, during an oppressively hot spell in the middle of summer 1619, two events occurred within a few weeks of each other that would profoundly shape the course of history. In the newly built church at Jamestown, the General Assembly — the first gathering of a representative governing body in America — came together. A few weeks later, a battered privateer entered the Chesapeake Bay carrying the first African slaves to land on mainland English America.

In *1619*, historian James Horn sheds new light on the year that gave birth to the great paradox of our nation: slavery in the midst of freedom. This portentous year marked both the origin of the most important political development in American history, the rise of democracy, and the emergence of what would in time become one of the nation's greatest challenges: the corrosive legacy of racial inequality that has afflicted America since its beginning” (Barnes and Noble).

## SM Summer Bookshelf -- Optional Reads

*These texts are completely optional, but hopefully one sparks an interest.*

*Start here, and read widely!*

Chimamanda Ngoze Adichie, [\*Americanah\*](#)

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

H.G. Bissinger, [\*Friday Night Lights: A Town, A Team, and a Dream\*](#)

Nicole Chung, [\*All You Can Ever Know\*](#)

Anthony Doerr, [\*All the Light We Cannot See\*](#)

Barbara Ehrenreich, [\*Nickel and Dimed: On \(not\) Getting by in America\*](#)

Mark Haddon, [\*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime\*](#)

Arlie Hochschild, [\*Strangers in Their Own Land\*](#)

Laila Lalami, [\*The Other Americans\*](#)

Rebecca Makkai, [\*The Great Believers\*](#)

Emily St. John Mandel, [\*Station Eleven\*](#)

Trevor Noah, [\*Born a Crime\*](#)

Tommy Orange, [\*There There\*](#)

George Orwell, [\*1984\*](#)

Julie Otsuka [\*When the Emperor Was Divine\*](#)

David A. Robinson [\*The Barren Grounds\*](#)

Brian Stevenson, [\*Just Mercy\*](#)

Angie Thomas, [\*The Hate U Give\*](#)

R. Eric Thomas, [\*Here For It: Or, How to Save Your Soul in America: Essays\*](#)

Colson Whitehead, [\*The Nickel Boys\*](#)

Jesmyn Ward, [\*Sing, Unburied, Sing\*](#)

Isabel Wilkerson, [\*Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents\*](#)