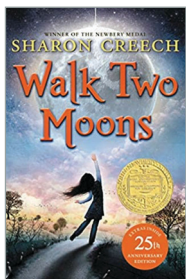


2023 BOOK LIST



JANUARY

Walk Two Moons
by Sharon Creech

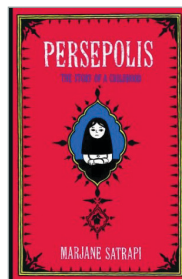
Salamanca (Sal) travels with her grandparents to reunite with her mother, and readers walk with her as Sal discovers some heart-wrenching life lessons. Delivered in the narrative of a 13-year-old girl, Salamanca's realizations about love, grief, and cultural identity resonate with readers of all ages. *Walk Two Moons* is taught at our Middle School in English 6/7.



FEBRUARY

King Lear
by Shakespeare

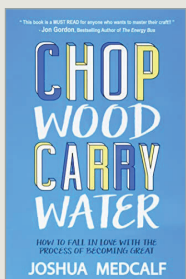
An aged, foolish king gives his power, wealth, and land to two undeserving daughters, revealing the end truth: We create our own tragedies. This play embodies the message that words on the page are not to be trusted, revealing that the Bard himself, a man of many words, warns his audience against the simple acceptance of the word as truth. *King Lear* is delivered in AP Lit on the heels of Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* and in tandem with Fall Term Choice books, *To Live*, *The Nickel Boys*, and *Kafka on the Shore*.



MARCH

Persepolis
by Marjane Satrapi

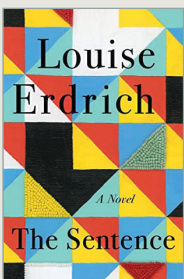
A recently rejuvenated selection in our World Literature classes, *Persepolis*, a powerful black-and-white graphic autobiographical novel, details Satrapi's childhood in Tehran during the overthrow of the Shah's regime. Marjane's heritage as the child of Marxists and the great-granddaughter of one of Iran's last emperors unfolds with incisive questions and reveals the understanding that education is essential to true freedom.



APRIL

Chop Wood, Carry Water
by Joshua Medcalf

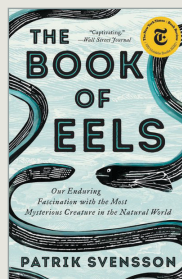
Required summertime reading for our boys in our Soccer COE, this little book kicks home the need to overcome self-defeating behaviors. The message that the means decidedly do not justify the end is delivered, along with a heavy dose of gratitude, a fair share of the realization that a blessing can be a curse, and the awareness that building our own houses is our own job, one we cannot hand off to others.



MAY

The Sentence
by Louise Erdrich

Flora dies on All Souls' Day, but she refuses to vacate the small independent bookstore a place she, as a living entity and then a ghost, haunts Tookie during Minneapolis's year of grief. Tookie, formerly sentenced for complicity in a murder, begins the novel with a dictionary wherein she looks up the word, "sentence." With 2020's upheaval, from the pandemic to the police killing of George Floyd, front and center, Pulitzer Prize winning Louise Erdrich delivers a quiet reflection described by one critic "so current the ink feels wet."

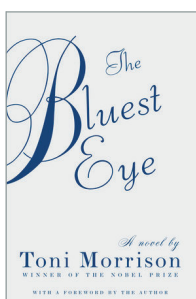


JUNE

The Book of Eels
by Patrik Svensson

Patrik Svensson's work addresses timeless eel questions: Where do they come from? Are they fish? Are they some other type of creature? Science has not delivered many verdicts. Aristotle, Sigmund Freud, and Rachel Carson weigh in, as do experts in marine biology, but eels remain a mystery, one humanity has yet to fully understand.

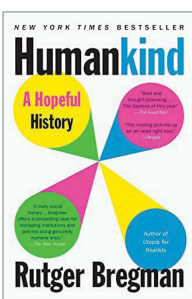
***This meeting will be held on Sunday, June 25.



JULY

The Bluest Eye
by Toni Morrison

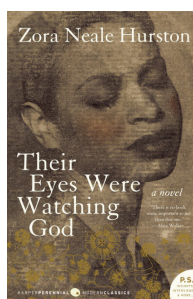
Toni Morrison's first novel, *The Bluest Eye*, stars an 11-year-old Black girl, Pecola Breedlove, who prays her eyes turn blue. She has a love for blond, blue-eyed children. She wants to be beautiful, and she wants to be seen, so her world will be kinder, more loving. Percola's journey into an obsession with beauty as it is promoted by social dictims is delivered and received as a Winter Term choice book in AP Literature.



AUGUST

Humankind
by Rutger Bregman

In the spirit of *Sapiens*, a 2022-23 Alumni Book Club choice, Bregman postulates that believing in basic human goodness is not just hopeful--it's realistic. Hope and faith in humanity, Rutger Bregman tells us, will result in the reality of humanity's kindness and altruism--and a better world.



SEPTEMBER

Their Eyes Were Watching God
by Zora Neale Hurston

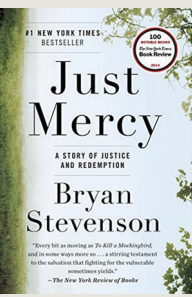
Zora Neale Hurston's timeless portrayal of Janie Crawford is firmly rooted in the literary canon as A PBS Great American Read Top 100 Pick. Out of print for three decades because of a lack of interest in the Black American female perspective, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* was reprinted in 1978, and began, finally, its climb to its rightful prominence. This beautiful novel is featured in several SSM classes, including English Department electives and AP Literature and Composition.



OCTOBER

All the Light We Cannot See
by Anthony Doerr

Anthony Doerr's 2014 *All the Light We Cannot See* follows 12-year-old Marie-Laure through the Nazi occupation of Paris through her escape to Saint-Malo and beyond and simultaneously traces German orphan Werner Pfennig, a boy fascinated with the radio, as he finds salvation from poverty and follows the Nazi directive to track down the Resistance. In this beautiful novel, Doerr paints the ways people seek love and kindness in the face of global cruelty. There is light we cannot see.



NOVEMBER

Just Mercy
by Bryan Stevenson

The author recounts his work prior to, during, and after his founding of the Equal Justice Initiative, and its mission to defend the most desperate, the poorest, and the wrongly condemned. Walter McMillian, sentenced to die for a brutal murder, engulfs Bryan Stevenson--and the reader--with conspiracy, political dominance, and sharp injustice, all which deliver a cathartic understanding of mercy and justice. This book is featured in our AP Language classes.



DECEMBER

Antigone
by Sophocles

Featured in SSM's Advanced World Literature classes and, previously, in AP Literature, Sophocles's depiction of Oedipus's daughter and her need to bury her beloved brother dispatches a classic conundrum: Obey? Or do what is right? Is obeying the right thing to do? Antigone is a feminist before the word even existed, and today, she, an ancient Greek literary creation, crystalizes the breakthrough of gender equality.