

**To: Parents of Rising Juniors (Honors/Gifted and Pre-AP classes)**

**From: Junior Language Arts Teachers**

Dear Parents,

The Language Arts Department at Brookwood High School encourages all of its students to continue reading as part of our summer reading program. It is our goal to make reading a pleasurable activity and a learning experience. Reading provides many benefits besides the obvious increase in vocabulary skills and general knowledge. Therefore, as we prepare to instruct your son or daughter as a junior at Brookwood High School in the fall, we require each student to prepare for junior year by continuing to read over the summer.

Rising juniors taking either Honors/Gifted or Pre-AP American Literature and Composition must read one of the following titles during the summer:

1. *The Things They Carried*\* by Tim O'Brien (nonfiction style)
2. *The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan
3. *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri
4. *To Kill a Mockingbird*\*\* by Harper Lee
5. *Becoming* by Michelle Obama (nonfiction)

\*This selection contains violent imagery and some coarse language about war and sex as O'Brien recounts the lives of Vietnam era American soldiers; read only if you and your parents are comfortable with such uncensored historical narratives.

\*\*This selection contains language and themes that some readers may find offensive or troubling, particularly racial slurs commonly used during the time period in which the story is set. These words are included to accurately depict the attitudes and prejudices of the characters and society at that time, and to confront the realities of racism in America's history.

We appreciate your cooperation in stressing the value of reading in order to better your student's opportunities for educational success.

As for the novels and works of nonfiction above, please see the back of this letter for more information about each suggested reading choice. We are certain that you will find one of these choices engaging and rewarding.

All rising juniors are expected to have read their novels before returning to school on August 5, 2024. All juniors will be given a Summer Reading Assignment by their language arts teacher. This assignment will be weighted as a quiz grade, and it will be completed during the first two weeks of school.

Sincerely,

Eleventh Grade Language Arts Teachers

1. ***The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien** –Tracing the tour of one American platoon, this book is not just a tale of the Vietnam War, although it's considered one of the finest books ever about combat. This award-winning book is a brutal, sometimes funny, often profound narrative about the human heart—how it fares under pressure, and what it can endure. (From NEAbigread.org)

2. ***The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan** – In sixteen interwoven stories, Amy Tan's characters—four Chinese immigrant mothers and their American-raised daughters—struggle to connect despite the ghosts and secrets of the past. (From NEAbigread.org)

3. ***The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri** - *The Namesake* follows the Ganguli family through its journey from Calcutta to Cambridge to the Boston suburbs. Ashima and Ashoke Ganguli arrive in America at the end of the 1960s, shortly after their arranged marriage in Calcutta, in order for Ashoke to finish his engineering degree at MIT. Ashoke is forward-thinking, ready to enter into American culture if not fully at least with an open mind. His young bride is far less malleable. Isolated, desperately missing her large family back in India, she will never be at peace with this new world. (From Amazon.com)

4. ***To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee** - *To Kill a Mockingbird* takes place in the fictional town of Maycomb, Alabama, during the Great Depression. The protagonist is Jean Louise (“Scout”) Finch, an intelligent though unconventional girl who ages from six to nine years old during the course of the novel. She is raised with her brother, Jeremy Atticus (“Jem”), by their widowed father, Atticus Finch. He is a prominent lawyer who encourages his children to be empathetic and just. He notably tells them that it is “a sin to kill a mockingbird,” alluding to the fact that the birds are innocent and harmless. *To Kill A Mockingbird* became both an instant bestseller and a critical success when it was first published in 1960. It went on to win the Pulitzer Prize in 1961 and was later made into an Academy Award-winning film, also a classic. (From Britannica.com)

5. ***Becoming* by Michelle Obama** - In her memoir, a work of deep reflection and mesmerizing storytelling, Michelle Obama invites readers into her world, chronicling the experiences that have shaped her—from her childhood on the South Side of Chicago to her years as an executive balancing the demands of motherhood and work, to her time spent at the world’s most famous address. With unerring honesty and lively wit, she describes her triumphs and her disappointments, both public and private, telling her full story as she has lived it—in her own words and on her own terms. Warm, wise, and revelatory, *Becoming* is the deeply personal reckoning of a woman of soul and substance who has steadily defied expectations—and whose story inspires us to do the same. (From Amazon.com)