



June 8, 2017

Dear Upper School students and parents,

Summer is almost here! It's time for sunshine, beaches, fireflies...and summer reading! As we have done for many years, the Upper School English teachers have selected summer reading books required for students entering grades 9-12. These books will form the foundations of our English discussions in the first few days of school and will introduce themes that will be addressed throughout the year. Students are expected to read attentively, annotate their texts, and be ready to discuss them in the fall.

Once again, we are happy to be able to provide copies of all required summer reading books to all students. We are also including some guiding questions that students can consider as they read (enclosed.) Annotating the summer reading is recommended, as students are expected to discuss the material in depth when we return in the fall. We hope the students enjoy their summer reading books, and we encourage parents to read along, too!

Of course, the fun doesn't have to stop with the required reading books; the US librarian, Larry Williams, has put together a terrific list of recommended summer reading to keep you entertained on lazy afternoons, long flights, late nights in the bunk, or wherever you find yourself this summer. Happy reading!

In friendship,

Liz Heck, Sarah Levy, Brian Chu, Rachel Mazor,

Paul Beekmeyer, and Sidney Bridges,

Upper School English Faculty



Guiding Questions for Upper School Summer Reading

9th Grade: You will read Chaim Potok's *The Chosen*, the story of two young men in 1940s Brooklyn who form a friendship despite differences in their religious practices and family backgrounds. **Note: in order to support your reading of this text, we have prepared a glossary of terms that may be unfamiliar; please consult this glossary as you read. You will not be quizzed on these terms upon your return, but they may be incorporated into an assessment in the first few weeks of the school year.

As you read, ask yourself: How do Danny and Reuven each make decisions about the future, and what roles do family, tradition, historical context, and personal preference play in the choices each boy makes? What does it mean to be "chosen"? Additionally, pay attention to the use of silence in Danny's family and religion. When we come together in the fall, we will explore how this is similar to (and different from) the use of silence in some Quaker traditions and practices.

10th Grade: You will read F. Scott Fitzgerald's Jazz age novel, *The Great Gatsby*, which describes the young and mysterious millionaire Jay Gatsby, whose obsessive love leads to ruin.

As you read, ask yourself: What is involved in the process of determining one's own identity? What sacrifices do people make in creating new identities? What relationships do we have with our past? How does the story of Jay Gatsby relate to Quaker testimonies of simplicity and truth?

11th Grade: You will read Franz Kafka's *The Sons*. This collection of short stories, including the famous "Metamorphosis," as well as a letter Kafka wrote to his own father, introduces struggles between fathers and sons that are at turns touching, troubling, and surreal.

As you read, ask yourself: What are the obligations between parents and children? What happens when family members fail to meet those obligations? What is the role of metaphor in describing real relationships between parents and children? How does Kafka's work relate to the Quaker testimony of integrity?

12th Grade: You will read George Orwell's genre-defining dystopian vision of "the future," *1984*. (Please note: you should read the so-called "Appendix" for *1984*--it is actually part of the novel!)

As you read *1984*, ask yourself: How does Orwell's vision of the future compare to our present? How does Big Brother redefine language to control the population? What is Orwell exploring about the use of language to define ourselves as individuals, as well as members of a society? How is language connected to collective memory and political history? How do Orwell's ideas relate to the Quaker search for truth?