



June 1, 2018

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.) 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,  
and Paul Beekmeyer,

Upper School English Faculty



### Guiding Questions for Upper School Summer Reading

9th Grade: You will read Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *Never Let Me Go*, the story of three students at an unusual boarding school whose friendship is tested by matters of love and death.

**As you read *Never Let Me Go*, ask yourself: What is revealed about the characters through what is written (text) and what is unwritten (subtext)? What do I notice about the relationships (and the lack thereof) between children and adults? One of the important testimonies of Quakerism is truth-seeking; what does this novel say about the challenges of seeking truth?**

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 must also 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?**