

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FREE-CHOICE BOOKS

(but you may choose a book not on this list)

The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing, Traitor to the Nation, Volume 1: The Pox Party by M.T. Anderson >>Diaries, letters, and other manuscripts chronicle the experiences of Octavian, a young African American, from birth to age sixteen, as he is brought up as part of a science experiment in the years leading up to and during the Revolutionary War. (National Book Award Winner) (Erica Cuyugan, Santa Monica Public Librarian)

Paper Towns by John Green >>Quentin “Q” Jacobsen basks in the predictable boringness of his life until the beautiful and exciting Margo Roth Spiegelman takes him on a midnight adventure and then mysteriously disappears. (E.C.)

Thirteen Reasons Why by Jay Asher >>When high school student Clay Jensen receives a box in the mail containing thirteen cassette tapes recorded by his classmate Hannah, who committed suicide, he spends a bewildering night listening to Hannah’s voice recounting the events leading up to her death. (E.C.)

Marcelo in the Real World by Francisco X. Stork >>Marcelo Sandoval, a 17-year-old boy on the high-functioning end of the autistic spectrum, faces new challenges, including romance and injustice, when he goes to work for his father in the mailroom of a corporate law firm. (E.C.)

Seven Days in the Art World by Sarah Thornton. >>A fly-on-the-wall account of the smart and strange subcultures that make, trade, curate, collect, and hype contemporary art. (Art Teacher Amy Bouse)

Flight by Sherman Alexie >>A Native American teenager in foster care makes a poor choice (shooting up a bank) which results in an out-of-body vision quest. His experiences in the bodies of other individuals in different times and different places help him come to terms with his identity, his father, and his place in the world. Quick and easy read that will be hard to put down. (Outreach Specialist Kimberly Nao)

Drop City by T.C. Boyle >>A well written book about hippies. Music is a supernatural element woven throughout the novel. I thought it was fantastic. (English Teacher Stephanie Dew)

House of Mirth by Edith Wharton. >>Some readers may find this novel depressing, but what depressed me was that the book had to come to an end. Poor Lily Bart—I felt for her, too. Amazing writing. (S.D.)

The Reluctant Fundamentalist by Mohsin Hamid >>In the Lahore marketplace, a Pakistani man approaches an American who sits drinking tea: “Excuse me, sir, but may I be of assistance? Ah, I see I have alarmed you. Do not be frightened by my beard: I am a lover of America.” (English Teacher Rob Thais)

Peak by Roland Smith >>Thrilling novel about mountain climbing in the Himalayas. (Samohi Librarian Dana Bart-Bell)

Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins >>In the future, everyone in the world’s twelve districts works for “The Capitol.” Once a year, two teenagers from each district are sent to compete in the “Hunger Games,” a competition for survival. (D.B.-B.)

Life As We Knew It by Susan Beth Pfeffer >>One month of survival after an asteroid crashes into the moon. (D.B.-B.)

Pride and Prejudice and Zombies by Jane Austen & Seth Grahame Smith >> After two centuries someone finally remedies Austen’s shameful neglect of the undead. The dark underbelly of Darcy and Lizzie.

Kabul Beauty School by Deborah Rodriguez >>The Taliban are overthrown, so now women in Afghanistan can go get their hair done! The U.S. author tells the funny, colorful, suspenseful true story of her beauty school’s fascinating students. (History Teacher Adrienne Karyadi)