Dear Sebring High School Students and Parents:

All Sebring High School students are required to read independently over the summer. The utmost care has been taken to prepare lists with a large variety of books appropriate for high school students, but parents are urged to review the titles with their children and make choices as a family. You should be aware that all of these titles have been approved by the state of Florida for their use in the classroom. If you should have any questions about a book, please feel free to contact the school at 471-2500.

Students will have assignments with their summer reading book/s at the beginning of the school year. They will also be able to earn an SHS Literacy Card—which will allow them privileges as an SHS student—if they are successful in completing these assignments.

Some of the titles listed on the following pages are available at the SHS library and can be checked out over the summer. They are also available at the local public libraries, at Linda’s Books, and at Books A Million. Students should also be prepared to complete assignments and a project on this book by the second week of class. Every student should bring the book they read to their English class on the first day of class.

Please read the descriptions below to see what students should be reading over the summer.

**In English II students should choose one of the following books to read:**

*A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier* by Ishmael Beah

This absorbing account by a young man who, as a boy of 12, gets swept up in Sierra Leone's civil war goes beyond even the best journalistic efforts in revealing the life and mind of a child abducted into the horrors of warfare. Beah's harrowing journey transforms him overnight from a child enthralled by American hip-hop music and dance to an internal refugee bereft of family, wandering from village to village in a country grown deeply divided by the indiscriminate atrocities of unruly, sociopathic rebel and army forces. Beah then finds himself in the army—in a drug-filled life of casual mass slaughter that lasts until he is 15, when he's brought to a rehabilitation center sponsored by UNICEF and partnering NGOs. The process marks out Beah as a gifted spokesman for the center's work after his “expatriation” to civilian life in the capital, where he lives with his family and a distant uncle. When the war finally engulfs the capital, it sends 17-year-old Beah fleeing again, this time to the U.S., where he now lives. (Beah graduated from Oberlin College in 2004.) Told in clear, accessible language by a young writer with a gifted literary voice, this memoir seems destined to become a classic firsthand account of war and the ongoing plight of child soldiers in conflicts worldwide.

*A Night to Remember* by Walter Lord

James Cameron's 1997 Titanic movie is a smash hit, but Walter Lord's 1955 classic remains in some ways unsurpassed. Lord interviewed scores of Titanic passengers, fashioning a gripping you-are-there account of the ship's sinking that you can read in half the time it takes to see the film. The book boasts many perfect movie moments not found in Cameron's film. When the ship hits the berg, passengers see "tiny splinters of ice in the air, fine as dust, that give off myriads of bright colors whenever caught in the glow of the deck lights." Survivors saw dawn reflected off other icebergs in a rainbow of shades, depending on their angle toward the sun: pink, mauve, white, deep blue—a landscape so eerie, a little boy tells his mom, "Oh, Muddie, look at the beautiful North Pole with no Santa Claus on it." A Titanic funnel falls, almost hitting a lifeboat—and consequently washing it 30 yards away from the wreck, saving all lives aboard. One man calmly rides the vertical boat down as it sinks, steps into the sea, and doesn't even get his head wet while waiting to be successfully rescued. On one side of the boat, almost no males are permitted in the lifeboats; on the other, even a male Pekingese dog gets a seat. Lord includes a crucial, tragically ironic drama Cameron couldn't fit into the film: the failure of the nearby ship Californian to save all those aboard the sinking vessel because distress lights were misread as random flickering and the telegraph was an early wind-up model that no one would understand. Lord's account is also smarter about the horrifying class structure of the disaster, which Cameron reduces to Hollywood formula. No children died in the First and Second Class decks; 53 out of 76 children in steerage died. According to the press, which regarded the lower-class passengers as a small loss to society, "The night was a magnificent confirmation of women and children first, yet somehow the loss rate was higher for Third Class children than First Class men." As the ship sank, writes Lord, "the poop deck, normally Third Class space ... was suddenly becoming attractive to all kinds of people." Lord's logic is as cold as the Atlantic, and his bitter wit is quite dry.

The Counte of Monte Cristo by Alexandre Dumas

A classic adventure novel, often considered Dumas' best work, and frequently included on lists of the best novels of all time. Completed in 1844, and released as an 18-part series over the next two years, Dumas collaborated with other authors throughout. The story takes place in France, Italy, and the Mediterranean from the end of the rule of Napoleon I through the reign of Louis-Philippe.

*Born at Midnight* by C.C. Hunter

One night Kylie Galen finds herself at the wrong party, with the wrong people, and it changes her life forever. Her mother ships her off to Shadow Falls—a camp for troubled teens, and within hours of arriving, it becomes painfully clear that her fellow campers aren't just “troubled.” Here at Shadow Falls, vampires, werewolves, shapeshifters, witches and fairies train side by side—learning to harness their powers, control their magic and live in the normal world. Kylie’s never felt normal, but surely she doesn’t belong here with a bunch of paranormal freaks either. Or does she? They insist Kylie is one of them, and that she was brought here for a reason. As if life wasn’t complicated enough, enter Derek and Lucas. Derek’s a half-fae who’s determined to be her boyfriend, and Lucas is a smokin’ hot werewolf with whom Kylie shares a secret past. Both Derek and Lucas couldn’t be more different, but they both have a powerful hold on her heart. Even though Kylie feels deeply uncertain about everything, one thing is becoming painfully clear—Shadow Falls is exactly where she belongs...
City of Ashes by Cassandra Clare. Clay Fray just wishes that her life would go back to normal. But what's normal when you're a demon-slaying Shadowhunter, your mother is in a magically induced coma, and you can suddenly see Downworlders like werewolves, vampires, and faeries? If Clary left the world of the Shadowhunters behind, it would mean more time with her best friend, Simon, who's becoming more than a friend. But the Shadowhunting world isn't ready to let her go—especially her handsome, infuriating, newfound brother, Jace. And Clary's only chance to help her mother is to track down rogue Shadowhunter Valentine, who is probably insane, certainly evil—and also her father. To complicate matters, someone in New York City is murdering Downworlder children. Is Valentine behind the killings—and if he is, what is he trying to do? When the second of the Mortal Instruments, the Soul-Sword, is stolen, the terrifying Inquisitor arrives to investigate and zooms right in on Jace. How can Clary stop Valentine if Jace is willing to betray everything he believes in to help their father? In this breathtaking sequel to City of Bones, Cassandra Clare lures her readers back into the dark grip of New York City's Downworld, where love is never safe and power becomes the deadliest temptation.

Crewel by Gennifer Albin. Incapable. Awkward. Artless. That’s what the other girls whisper behind her back. But sixteen-year-old Adelice Lewys has a secret: She wants to fail. Gifted with the ability to weave time with matter, she’s exactly what the Guild is looking for, and in the world of Arras, being chosen to work the looms is everything a girl could want. It means privilege, eternal beauty, and being something other than a secretary. It also means the power to manipulate the very fabric of reality. But if controlling what people eat, where they live, and how many children they have is the price of having it all, Adelice isn’t interested. Not that her feelings matter, because she slipped and used her hidden talent for a moment. Now she has one hour to eat her mom’s overcooked pot roast. One hour to listen to her sister’s academy gossip and laugh at her dad’s jokes. One hour to pretend everything’s okay. And one hour to escape. Because tonight, they’ll come for her.

Day by Elie Wiesel. The publication of Day restores Elie Wiesel’s original title to the novel initially published in English as The Accident and clearly establishes it as the powerful conclusion to the author’s classic trilogy of Holocaust literature, which includes his memoir Night and novel Dawn. “In Night it is the ‘I’ who speaks,” writes Wiesel. “In the other two, it is the ‘I’ who listens and questions.” In its opening paragraphs, a successful journalist and Holocaust survivor steps off a New York City curb and into the path of an oncoming taxi. Consequently, most of Wiesel’s masterful portrayal of one man’s exploration of the historical tragedy that befell him, his family, and his people transpires in the thoughts, daydreams, and memories of the novel’s narrator. Tom benedict and again returns to the guiding questions that inform Wiesel’s trilogy: the meaning and worth of surviving the annihilation of a race, the effects of the Holocaust upon the modern character of the Jewish people, and the loss of one’s religious faith in the face of mass murder and human extermination.

Eleni by Nicolas Gage. Human diminishment is the theme of this masterwork, which shows how people can sacrifice their rational powers and noble instincts on the altar of a reductionist ideology, then descend into the (home) economics of envy and the politics of resentment, and end up killing off even the mildest opposition. Concretely, it is about how Communist guerrillas in Epirus took over the village of Lia, reduced the once sturdy villagers to treacherous, starving, vermin-infested semi-savages, used them for slave labor, and finally murdered many of them. The story centers on Eleni Gatzoyiannis, who attempts to escape with her children, more for their sakes than her own. Nicholas Gage reports here on what he found out about exactly what happened in that doomed village and what happened to Eleni. Gage is, in fact, Eleni’s only son and he managed to escape to America just before the Greek national armies managed to rid the northern mountains of the Communists. A successful journalist in the US, he has written a marvelous account of some unsettling and depressing events.

If I Grow Up by Todd Strasser. In a gripping novel with a plot pulled from the headlines, Todd Strasser turns his attention to gang life in the inner-city projects. DeShawn is a teenager growing up in the projects. Most of his friends only see one choice: join up to a gang. DeShawn is smart enough to want to stay in school and make something more of himself, but when his family is starving while his friends have fancy bling and new sneakers, DeShawn is forced to decide—is his integrity more important than feeding his family?

Little Women by Louisa May Alcott. The story of four sisters—Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy—is one that will forever be a part of American literary culture. Set in the mid-1800s in a small New England town, Louisa May Alcott invites the reader into the home of these four sisters as they deal with the struggles of having a father off fighting in the Civil War, having to mature and grow up supporting themselves with little jobs here and there and finding out about the joys of love, children, and the sadness of death. This coming-of-age novel follows Jo mainly as she is faced with the day to day choices that will help her sisters and mother make it through the harsh New England winters.

Lonesome Dove by Larry McMurtry. Lonesome Dove, cowboys herding cattle on a great trail-drive, seems like the very stuff of that cliched myth, but McMurtry bravely tackles the task of creating meaningful literature out of it. At first the novel seems the kind of anti-mythic, anti-heroic story one might expect: the main protagonists are an inarticulate pair of former Texas Rangers turned horse rustlers. Yet when the trail begins, the story picks up an energy and a drive that makes heroes of these men. Their mission may be historically insignificant, or pointless—McMurtry is smart enough to address both possibilities—but there is an undoubted valor in their lives. The result is a historically aware, intelligent, romantic novel of the mythic west that won the 1986 Pulitzer Prize for fiction.

Something Wicked This Way Comes by Ray Bradbury. A masterpiece of modern Gothic literature, Something Wicked This Way Comes is the enigmatic story of two boys, James Nightshade and William Hallaway, and the evil that grips their small Midwestern town with the arrival of a “dark carnival” one Autumn midnight. How these two innocents, both age 13, save the souls of the town (as well as their own), makes for compelling reading on timeless themes. What would you do if your secret wishes could be granted by the mysterious ringmaster Mr. Dark? Bradbury excels in revealing the dark side that exists in us all, teaching us ultimately to celebrate the shadows rather than fear them. In many ways, this is a companion piece to his joyful, nostalgia-drenched Dandelion Wine, in which Bradbury presented us with one perfect summer as seen through the eyes of a 12-year-old. In Something Wicked This Way Comes, he deftly explores the fearsome delights of one perfectly terrifying, unforgettable autumn.
The Way Things Were: Short Stories of Past Experiences by Frances O'Roark Dowell Janie Gorman wants to be normal. The problem with that: she's not. She's smart and creative and a little bit funky. She's also an unwilling player in her parents'; modern-day, let's-live-on-a-goat-farm experiment (regrettfully, instigated by a younger, much more enthusiastic Janie). This, to put it simply, is not helping Janie reach that "normal target" She has to milk goats every day and endure her mother's pseudo celebrity in the homemade-life, crunchy mom blogosphere. Goodbye the days of frozen lasagna and suburban living, hello crazy long bus ride to high school and total isolation—and hovering embarrassments of all kinds. The fresh baked bread is good… the threat of homemade jeans, not so much. It would be nice to go back to that old suburban life—some grown up, high school version of it, complete with nice, normal boyfriends who wear crew neck sweaters and like social studies. So, what's wrong with normal? Well, kind of everything. She knows that, of course, why else would she learn bass and join Jam Band, how else would she know to idolize infamous wild-child and high school senior Emma (her best friend Sarah's older sister), why else would she get arrested while doing a school project on a local freedom school (jail was not part of the assignment). And, why else would she kind of be falling in "like" with a boy named Monster… yes, that is his real name. Janie was going for normal, but she missed her mark by about ten miles and we mean that as a compliment. Frances O'Roark Dowell's fierce humor and keen eye make her YA debut literary and wise. In the spirit of John Green and E. Lockhart, Dowell's relatable, quirky characters and clever, fluid writing prove that growing up gets complicated and normal is WAY overrated.

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time by Mark Haddon Mark Haddon's bitingly funny debut novel, The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time, is a murder mystery of sorts—one told by an autistic version of Adrian Mole. Fifteen-year-old Christopher John Francis Boone is mathematically gifted and socially hopeless, raised in a working-class home by parents who can barely cope with their child's quirks. He takes everything that he sees (or is told) at face value, and is unable to sort out the strange behavior of his elders and peers. Late one night, Christopher comes across his neighbor's poodle, Wellington, impaled on a garden fork. Wellington's owner finds him cradling her dead dog in his arms, and has him arrested. After spending a night in jail, Christopher resolves—against the objection of his father and neighbors—to discover just who has murdered Wellington. He is encouraged by Siobhan, a social worker at his school, to write a book about his investigations, and the result—quirkily illustrated, with each chapter given its own prime number—is The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time.

The Old Man and the Sea by Ernest Hemingway Here, for a change, is a fish tale that actually does honor to the author. In fact The Old Man and the Sea revived Ernest Hemingway's career. It also led directly to his receipt of the Nobel Prize in 1954 (an award Hemingway gladly accepted, despite his earlier observation that "no [man] that ever won the Nobel Prize ever wrote anything worth reading afterwards"). A half century later, it's still easy to see why. This tale of an aged Cuban fisherman going head-to-head (or hand-to-fist) with a magnificent marlin encapsulates Hemingway's favorite motifs of physical and moral challenge.

Ten Miles Past Normal by Frances O'Roark Dowell Janie Gorman wants to be normal. The problem with that: she's not. She's smart and creative and a little bit funky. She's also an unwilling player in her parents'; modern-day, let's-live-on-a-goat-farm experiment (regrettfully, instigated by a younger, much more enthusiastic Janie). This, to put it simply, is not helping Janie reach that "normal target" She has to milk goats every day and endure her mother’s pseudo celebrity in the homemade-life, crunchy mom blogosphere. Goodbye the days of frozen lasagna and suburban living, hello crazy long bus ride to high school and total isolation—and hovering embarrassments of all kinds. The fresh baked bread is good… the threat of homemade jeans, not so much. It would be nice to go back to that old suburban life—some grown up, high school version of it, complete with nice, normal boyfriends who wear crew neck sweaters and like social studies. So, what's wrong with normal? Well, kind of everything. She knows that, of course, why else would she learn bass and join Jam Band, how else would she know to idolize infamous wild-child and high school senior Emma (her best friend Sarah’s older sister), why else would she get arrested while doing a school project on a local freedom school (jail was not part of the assignment). And, why else would she kind of be falling in "like" with a boy named Monster… yes, that is his real name. Janie was going for normal, but she missed her mark by about ten miles and we mean that as a compliment. Frances O'Roark Dowell's fierce humor and keen eye make her YA debut literary and wise. In the spirit of John Green and E. Lockhart, Dowell’s relatable, quirky characters and clever, fluid writing prove that growing up gets complicated and normal is WAY overrated.

The Chosen by Chaim Potok Few stories offer more warmth, wisdom, or generosity than this tale of two boys, their fathers, their friendship, and the chaotic times in which they live. Though on the surface it explores religious faith, it is intellectually committed as well as the passionately observant—the struggles addressed in The Chosen are familiar to families of all faiths and in all nations. In 1940s Brooklyn, New York, an accident throws Reuven Malter and Danny Saunders together. Despite their differences (Reuven is a Modern Orthodox Jew with an intellectual, Zionist father; Danny is the brilliant son and rightful heir to a Hasidic rebbe), the young men form a deep, if unlikely, friendship. Together they negotiate adolescence, family conflicts, the crisis of faith engendered when Holocaust stories begin to emerge in the U.S., loss, love, and the journey to adulthood. The intellectual and spiritual clashes between fathers, between each son and his own father, and between the two young men, provide a unique backdrop for this exploration of fathers, sons, faith, loyalty, and, ultimately, the power of love.

The Joy Luck Club by Amy Tan A stunning literary achievement, The Joy Luck Club explores the tender and tenacious bond between four daughters and their mothers. The daughters know one side of their mothers, but they don't know anything about their earlier never-spooken lives in China. The mothers want love and obedience from their daughters, but they don't know the gifts that the daughters keep to themselves. Heartwarming and bittersweet, this is a novel for mother, daughters, and those that love them.

The Natural by Bernard Malamud Roy Hobbs, the baseball-playing protagonist of The Natural, makes the mistake of pronouncing aloud his dream: to be the best there ever was. Such hubris, of course, invites divine intervention, but the brilliance of Bernard Malamud's novel is the second chance it offers its hero, elevating him to the status of a legend. This tale of an aged Cuban fisherman going head-to-head (or hand-to-fist) with a magnificent marlin encapsulates Hemingway's favorite motifs of physical and moral challenge.
Thirteen Reasons Why by Jay Asher. Clay Jensen returns home from school to find a strange package with his name on it lying on his porch. Inside he discovers several cassette tapes recorded by Hannah Baker — his classmate and crush — who committed suicide two weeks earlier. Hannah's voice tells him that there are thirteen reasons why she decided to end her life. Clay is one of them. If he listens, he'll find out why. Clay spends the night crisscrossing his town with Hannah as his guide. He becomes a firsthand witness to Hannah's pain, and learns the truth about himself—a truth he never wanted to face. Thirteen Reasons Why is the gripping, addictive international bestseller that has changed lives the world over. It's an unrelenting modern classic.

Unwind by Neal Shusterman. Set in the future, the second civil war is fought over abortion. To end the war, a compromise is reached that ends the practice of abortion but creates an alternative called "unwinding." Between the ages of 13 and 17, parents or guardians can choose to have their children unwound, which involves having every part of their bodies harvested to be "donated" to another person so, technically, they don't really die. The complex and compelling plot follows three teens whose stories intertwine when they escape while on their way to the harvest camps. Fifteen-year-old Connor's parents can no longer control him. Lev, a tithe, was raised by religious parents for the sole purpose of being unwound. Risa, a ward of the state, is a victim of shrinking budgets since she is not a talented enough musician to be kept alive. Neal Shusterman's engrossing novel is narrated in an even cadence and matter-of-fact tone that suits the author's straightforward narrative style. His wide array of voices makes the involved story line, which is left wide open for what is sure to be an interesting sequel, easy to follow. This gripping, thought-provoking novel is guaranteed to lead to interesting discussions about abortion, adoption, organ donation, religion, politics, and health care.

Virals by Kathy Reichs. Tory Brennan, niece of acclaimed forensic anthropologist Temperance Brennan (of the Bones novels and hit TV show), is the leader of a ragtag band of teenage "sci-philie" who live on a secluded island off the coast of South Carolina. When the group rescues a dog caged for medical testing on a nearby island, they are exposed to an experimental strain of canine parvovirus that changes their lives forever. As the friends discover their heightened senses and animal-quick reflexes, they must combine their scientific curiosity with their newfound physical gifts to solve a cold-case murder that has suddenly become very hot if they can stay alive long enough to catch the killer's scent. Fortunately, they are now more than friends. They're a pack. They are Virals.

Department Nineteen by Will Hill. Jamie Carpenter's life will never be the same. His father is dead, his mother is missing, and he was just rescued by an enormous man named Frankenstein. Jamie is brought to Department 19, where he is pulled into a secret organization responsible for policing the supernatural, founded more than a century ago by Abraham Van Helsing and the other survivors of Dracula. Aided by Frankenstein's monster, a beautiful vampire girl with her own agenda, and the members of the agency, Jamie must attempt to save his mother from a terrifyingly powerful vampire. Department 19 takes us through history, across Europe, and beyond—from the cobbled streets of Victorian London to prohibition-era New York, from the icy wastes of Arctic Russia to the treacherous mountains of Transylvania. Part modern thriller, part classic horror, it's packed with mystery, mayhem, and a level of suspense that makes a Darren Shan novel look like a romantic comedy.

In Advanced English II Honors and English II Pre-I.B. students should complete the following:

All students enrolling in English II Honors or English II Pre-I.B. will be required to read over the summer and complete assignments based on the reading. The reading and assignments will be available at the end of May. Students already enrolled in English I Honors will receive the reading and assignments in class. All other interested students may see Ms. Cochran in person, visit her website http://highmail.highlands.k12.fl.us/~cochrana/, or email cochrana@highlands.k12.fl.us. There will be a quiz covering the reading on the first day of class. All assignments will be due the second day of class.

Required reading during the year include: Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children by Ransom and Riggs AND Elements of Style by Strunk and White.

Note: Descriptions of these books were found at www.amazon.com. Please visit this website if you would like to read excerpts from the books before you purchase or borrow them.