

Pre AP English I
Summer Reading 2009

Dear Freshman,

Congratulations on your decision to take Pre AP English I next year. As part of this program, you are required to *read two books* over the summer.

Select two of the following books:

1. Copper Son by Sharon M. Draper
2. My Sister's Keeper by Jodi Picoult
3. Speak by Laurie Haas Anderson
4. Firestorm by David Klass
5. Deadline by Chris Crutcher
6. Peak by Roland Smith
7. Peeps by Scott Westerfield

Assignment: Attached to this letter, you will find two “One-Pagers.” You are required to complete one “One-Pager” for each book. You can choose to use a different “One-Pager” for each book, or you can use the same “One-Pager” for each book.

Along with your “One-Pager,” we suggest you take notes on setting, conflict, characters and their actions, and any other observations you make as you read. If you purchase a copy of the book, you may want to highlight and write notes in the margins. During the second week of school, you will be placed with a small group of students who have read the same books as you. Your group will talk about the books you have read and present the information to the entire class. The instructions for this assignment will be given to you during the first week of school.

Selecting Your Book: On the back of this note is a short description of each book. You can go to Amazon.com to read a longer description and even read excerpts from the books. Please choose your books wisely. We feel that we have given you a variety of choices, but you need to do some research before you commit to a book. Don't choose a book on the number of pages it contains! Some of the most difficult books to read are the shortest, and some of the most memorable books you read are the longest.

Once again, congratulations on selecting this course. We believe that you will learn a lot, work hard, and you will enjoy the class tremendously. We are already looking forward to next year!

If you have any questions, please contact one of the teachers below (until June 8th) or call the Guidance Office at 833-3300.

Sincerely,

Ann Pearson 833-3300 extension 1137 or govikings@mchsi.com anytime during the summer
Susan Teare 833-3300 extension 2151 or teares@mail.okaloosa.k12.fl.us

Copper Sun by Susan Draper: This action-packed, multifaceted, character-rich story describes the shocking realities of the slave trade and plantation life while portraying the perseverance, resourcefulness, and triumph of the human spirit. Amari is a 15-year-old Ashanti girl who is happily anticipating her marriage. Then, slavers arrive in her village, slaughter her family, and shatter her world. Trust and friendship develop between Amari and Polly, a white indentured servant. As readers embrace Amari and Polly, they will better understand the impact of human exploitation and suffering throughout history. In addition, they will gain a deeper knowledge of slavery, indentured servitude, and 18th-century sanctuaries for runaway slaves.

My Sister's Keeper by Jodi Picoult: Adult/High School As this compelling story opens, Anna has hired a lawyer to represent her in a medical emancipation suit to allow her to have control over her own body. Picoult skillfully relates the ensuing drama from the points of view of the parents; Anna; Cambell, the self-absorbed lawyer; Julia, the court-appointed guardian ad litem; and Jesse, the troubled oldest child in the family. Everyone's quandary is explicated and each of the characters is fully developed. There seems to be no easy answer, and readers are likely to be sympathetic to all sides of the case. This is a real page-turner and frighteningly thought-provoking.

Speak by Laurie Haas Anderson: Since the beginning of the school year, high school freshman Melinda has found that it's been getting harder and harder for her to speak out loud. What could have caused Melinda to suddenly fall mute? Could it be due to the fact that no one at school is speaking to her because she called the cops and got everyone busted at the seniors' big end-of-summer party? Or maybe it's because her parents' only form of communication is Post-It notes written on their way out the door to their nine-to-whenever jobs. While Melinda is bothered by these things, deep down she knows the real reason why she's been struck mute...

Firestorm by David Klaas: His mother is not his mother. His father is not his father. And if Jack he hadn't broken the high school rushing record that night, nothing would have changed. He'd just be going out for pizza, playing football, trying yet again to score with his girlfriend, P.J. But he did break the record. He appeared on the news. And now they have found him.

Ripped from the only world he has ever known, Jack plunges into a space-time-bending game of survival with no way out. The rules are shrouded in secrets they say he can't handle. But some things he learns fast: Trust no one. Never forget that your friends could reveal themselves as your enemies at any second. Every turn leads to betrayal. And if you don't go along with it, you die.

Deadline by Chris Crutcher: Just before his senior year, Ben Wolf is diagnosed with a rare, incurable leukemia. At 18, he has the legal right to keep the news to himself until he's ready to reveal it. With only his doctor and therapist in on his secret, Ben sets out to live an entire lifetime in a year: There are insects that pack it all into a day, he reasons. His goals are to join his brother on the football team; learn everything he can; and ask out gorgeous Dallas Suzuki. Crutcher fits far too much into this ambitious novel, which includes subplots about incest, pedophilia, manic depression, and intellectual freedom, as well as a Jesus-like character who appears in visions. And readers may feel distanced from Ben, whose first-person voice and reactions never quite feel authentic. But, as usual, Crutcher writes vivid sports action scenes, and teens' interest will be held by the story's dramatic premise, Ben's unlikely turn as a football hero, love scenes with Dallas (including some mildly explicit sex), and Ben's high-gear pursuit of life's biggest questions.

Peak by Roland Smith: Fourteen-year-old New Yorker Peak ("It could have been worse. My parents could have named me Glacier, or Abyss, or Crampon.") Marcello hones his climbing skills by scaling skyscrapers. After Peak is caught climbing the Woolworth Building, an angry judge gives him probation, with an understanding that Peak will leave New York and live with his famous mountaineer father in Thailand. Peak soon learns, however, that his father has other plans for him; he hopes that Peak will become the youngest person to climb Mt. Everest. Peak is whisked off to Tibet and finds himself in the complex world of an Everest base camp, where large amounts of money are at stake and climbing operations offer people an often-deadly shot at the summit. This is a thrilling, multifaceted adventure story. Smith includes plenty of mountaineering facts told in vivid detail (particularly creepy is his description of the frozen corpses that litter the mountain). But he also explores other issues, such as the selfishness that nearly always accompanies the intensely single-minded. A winner at every level.

Peeps by Scott Westerfield: Vampire stories are a staple of the publishing industry. Nineteen-year-old Cal, a Texas transplant became a parasite-positive, or peep—he prefers not to use the v-word. Now he works for the Night Watch, a secret branch of city government dedicated to tracking others of his kind. Unlike the rare natural carriers like Cal, who has acquired night vision, superhuman strength, and a craving for lots of protein, most peeps are insane cannibals lurking in darkness. But now the teen has found the young woman who infected him—and learns that something worse than peeps is threatening the city, and he is on the front lines. Cal's voice is genuine—he's a little geeky, as evidenced by the intermittent discussions on parasites, and he laces a dry humor through this immensely reasonable biological vampire story. The evocation of NYC is exactly right, so that even the most fantastic elements of the plot feel believable. Much of the story is concerned with Cal's detective work and growing relationship with Lace, his Major Revelation Incident (he tells her his secret); toward the end, the action picks up in a race to reveal the horrors to come. This innovative and original vampire story, full of engaging characters and just enough horror without any gore, will appeal to a wide audience.