

**INDEPENDENT READING LIST
ARDSLEY HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
2010- 2011**

Your independent reading selections must be made from the list below, unless you receive approval directly from your teacher. Feel free to select other titles by the authors listed.

For the list below, the accompanying numbers indicate the relative complexity of language and maturity of content.

1 _____ 2 _____ 3
Most accessible Most Challenging

Contemporary Non-Fiction

Bryson, Bill. A Short History of Nearly Everything (3): In *A Short History of Nearly Everything*, Bryson takes his ultimate journey—into the most intriguing and consequential questions that science seeks to answer.

Carson, Rachel. Silent Spring (2): Released in 1962, Carson offered the first shattering look at widespread ecological degradation and touched off an environmental awareness that still exists.

Chang, Jeff. Can't Stop Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation (1): Traces the history of the hip-hop culture, discussing how hip-hop came to define a new generation of youth rebellion and expression in North America.

DeFede, Jim. The Day the World Came to Town : 9/11 in Gander, Newfoundland (2): Tells the story of how the citizens of Gander, Newfoundland and its surrounding communities opened their hearts and homes to passengers on airliners bound for the United States that were forced to land in Gander when U.S. airspace was closed on September 11, 2001.

Diamond, Jared. Guns, Germs and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies (3): An epic story that offers a gripping expose on why the world is so unequal.

Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed (3): Offers geographic and environmental reasons why some human populations have flourished

Finkel, David. The Good Soldiers (2): Presents the story of the January 2007 surge into Iraq and President Bush's order to increase the number of American troops in order to provide security to Baghdad and Al Anbar Province.

Friedman, Thomas. The World is Flat: A Brief History of The Twenty-First Century (3): The World is Flat provides a very interesting view that establishes Thomas Freidman's view of globalization in the world today.

Gladwell, Malcolm. Blink (3): A social scientist's fascinating study of human behavior, including the influence of first impressions and "gut feelings."

The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference (3): Author looks at why major changes in our society so often happen suddenly and unexpectedly. Gladwell develops these concepts through entertainingly illustrative anecdotes, such as comparing the pedagogical methods of *Sesame Street* and *Blue's Clues*, or explaining why it would be even easier to play Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon with the actor Rod Steiger.

Gore, Albert. An Inconvenient Truth (2): Former Vice President Al Gore examines the climate crisis that is threatening the future of the planet, describes what the world's governments are doing to correct the problem, and explains why the problem should be taken more seriously

Grann, David. The Lost City of Z: A Tale of Deadly Obsession in the Amazon (2): Details English explorer Percy Fawcett's exploration for a lost city in the jungles of South America and relates efforts made by the author and other individuals to find out what happened to him.

Grisham, John. Innocent Man (3): Grisham's first nonfiction book concerns a man wrongly sentenced to death.

Guibert, Emmanuel. The Photographer (1): A graphic novel and photo journal that follows reporter Didier Lefevre on a dangerous journey through Afghanistan with the Doctors Without Borders mission.

Hersey, John. Hiroshima (2): Describes the effect of the bombing of Hiroshima on six survivors of the atomic blast.

Jackoway, Elizabeth. Turn Away Thy Son : Little Rock, the Crisis that Shocked the Nation (2): Chronicles the events surrounding the 1957 crisis in Little Rock, Arkansas, when Governor Orval Faubus attempted to block nine African-American students from entering Central High School.

Jaques, Martin. When China Rules the World: The End of the Western World and the Birth of a New Global Order (2): Discusses the influence that China's emergence as an economic superpower will have on political, cultural, and ethnic balance around the globe in the twenty-first century.

Johnson, Steven. Everything Bad is Good for You (2) Presents an examination of popular culture in America, and suggests--with examples from research--that vehicles of mass media and entertainment such as television and video games are evidence of an increasingly sophisticated cognitive culture that makes the mind measurable sharper than in the past.

Levitt, Steven D. and Stephen J. Dubner. Freakonomics (3): A probing study of compelling sociological questions, with some disturbing questions and perplexing, thought-provoking answers.

McMann, Colum. Let the Great World Spin (3): Philippe Petit's illicit 1974 high-wire walk between the World Trade Center towers is the touchstone for stories of the people down below, including an Irish monk living in the Bronx projects, a Park Avenue mother in mourning for her son who died in Vietnam, and a heroin-addicted hooker.

Mortenson, Greg. Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace . . . One School at a Time (2): One man's campaign to build schools in the most dangerous, remote, and anti-American reaches of Asia.

Plait, Phillip. Death from the skies!: These are the Ways the World Will End (2): A surprisingly upbeat look at all the ways the universe can destroy us.

Satrapi, Marjane. Persepolis (1): Contains black-and-white comic strip images in which the author shares the story of her life in Tehran, Iran, where she lived from ages six to fourteen while the country came under control of the Islamic regime.

Schlosser, Eric. Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All American Meal (2): In this fascinating sociocultural report, Schlosser digs into the deeper meaning of Burger King, Auggie's, The Chicken Shack, Jack-in-the-Box, Little Caesar's and myriad other examples of fast food in America.

Sorkin, Andrew Ross. Too Big to Fail: the inside story of how Wall Street and Washington fought to save the financial system from crisis--and themselves (3): Examines the financial crisis of the early twenty-first century and how powerful people in finance and politics have wrestled with the problem, and analyzes secret alliances and human dramas amid the bankruptcy of investment banks such as Lehman Brothers and Merrill Lynch.

Swanson, James. Chasing Lincoln's Killer (1): Recounts the twelve-day pursuit and capture of John Wilkes Booth, covering the chase through Washington D.C., Maryland, and Virginia, with a discussion of Abraham Lincoln as a father, husband, and friend that examines the impact of his death on those close to him.

Thomas, Lewis: The Lives of a Cell: Notes of a Biology Watcher (3): Throughout the book, Thomas reveals truly extraordinary facts about biology and microbiology that tend to leave the reader in awe.

Toobin, Jeffrey. The Nine: Inside the Secret World of the Supreme Court (2): Draws on interviews with the nine justices of the Supreme Court to offer an inside look at the Court's complex dynamic and the changes that may be in store for key issues, including abortion, civil rights, and presidential power, after the 2008 presidential election.

Wagner, E.J. The Science of Sherlock Holmes: From Baskerville Hall to the Valley of Fear, the Real Forensics Behind the Great Detective's Greatest Cases (2): Draws on the stories of Sherlock Holmes to trace the history of forensic science, describing when the stories deviated from fact, what forensic techniques were used in the stories, and how the stories compare to real-life cases.

Weisman, Alan. The World Without Us (3): In *The World Without Us*, Alan Weisman offers an original approach to questions of humanity's impact on the planet: he asks us to envision our Earth, without us.