

**INDEPENDENT READING LIST
ARDSLEY HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
2009 - 2010**

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.

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

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.

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

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

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.

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.