

US Independent Reading List-Summer 2014

Title	Author	Description	Genre
<i>The Air We Breathe</i>	Barrett, Andrea	In the fall of 1916, as U.S. involvement in WWI looms, the Adirondack town of Tamarack Lake houses a public sanitarium and private cure cottages for tuberculosis patients. Gossip about roommate changes, nurse visits, cliques and romantic connections dominate relations among the sick—mostly poor European immigrants. The timely theme focuses on how the tragedy, betrayal and heartbreak of war extend far beyond the battlefield.	Historical Fiction
<i>Amelia Anne is Dead and Gone</i> *Suitable for grades 10-12	Rosenfield, Kat	Becca has always longed to break free from her small, backwater hometown. But the discovery of an unidentified dead girl on the side of a dirt road sends the town--and Becca--into a tailspin. Unable to make sense of the violence of the outside world creeping into her backyard, Becca finds herself retreating inward...	Mystery/Crime
<i>Awakenings</i>	Sacks, Oliver	The remarkable story of a group of patients who contracted sleeping-sickness during the great epidemic just after World War I. Frozen for decades in a trance-like state, these men and women were given up as hopeless until 1969, when Dr. Oliver Sacks gave them the then-new drug L-DOPA, which had an astonishing, explosive, "awakening" effect.	Biography/Memoir
<i>The Bee Keeper's Apprentice</i>	King, Laurie R.	Sherlock Holmes takes on a young, female apprentice in this delightful story. In the early years of WWI, 15-year-old American Mary Russell encounters Holmes, retired in Sussex Downs where Conan Doyle left him raising bees. Mary, an orphan rebelling against her guardian aunt's strictures, impresses the sleuth with her intelligence and acumen. Holmes initiates her into the mysteries of detection, allowing her to participate in a few cases..	Historical Fiction
<i>Between Shades of Gray</i>	Sepetys, Ruta	Fifteen-year-old Lina is a Lithuanian girl living an ordinary life in 1939 - until Soviet officers invade her home and tear her family apart. Separated from her father and forced onto a crowded train, Lina, her mother, and her young brother make their way to a Siberian work camp, where they must to fight for their lives. Will strength, love, and hope be enough for Lina and her family to survive?	Historical Fiction
<i>Bring Up the Bodies: A Novel</i>	Mantel, Hilary	This book tells the story of Anne Boleyn and Thomas Cromwell, chief minister to Henry VIII, and the soap-opera worthy machinations of Cromwell and his evil allies to bring down the powerful wife of the king. Her characters are real and vivid people who bring to life the clash of ideals that gripped England at the time.	Historical Fiction
<i>Buddha Boy</i>	Kathe Koja	The kids at school call Jinsen "Buddha Boy"—he wears oversize tie-dyed dragon T-shirts, shaves his head, and always seems to be smiling. Justin is not happy to be paired with him in Science. What matters more: the high school social order or getting to know someone extraordinary?	Contemporary Fiction

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<i>The Cello Suites: J. S. Bach, Pablo Casals, and the Search for a Baroque Masterpiece</i>	Siblin, Eric	“An engrossing combination of musical and political history spiced with generally vivid descriptions of the cello suites themselves...[Siblin] has given us compelling portraits of a passionate, prickly Bach, of Casals, a musician who was also politically engaged, and of an engrossing cast of secondary characters. Best of all, <i>The Cello Suites</i> makes us want to pop in a CD and really listen to those cello suites. -- Wynne Delacoma, <i>Chicago Sun-Times</i>	Non-Fiction
<i>Chime</i>	Billingsley, Franny	Since her stepmother's recent death, 17-year-old Briony Larkin knows that if she can keep two secrets--that she is a witch and that she is responsible for the accident that left Rose, her identical twin, mentally compromised--and remember to hate herself always, no other harm will befall her family in their Swampsea parsonage at the beginning of the twentieth century. Set on a dark, chilling, yet stunning world	Science Fiction/Fantasy
<i>Code Name Verity</i>	Wein, Elizabeth	- Rich in historical detail and intrigue. In exchange for a temporary stay of execution and lesser forms of torture, a young female spy captured in Nazi-occupied France writes a confession of her activities in the Resistance. Her story is that of two women who should never have crossed paths, yet were destined to become the best of friends and embark upon the covert mission that would determine which of them would live or die.	Historical Fiction
<i>The Color of Water</i>	McBride, James	The extraordinary memoir of a young black man's search to uncover his white mother's past along with his own identity results in a powerful portrait of growing up, a meditation on race and identity, and a poignant, beautifully crafted hymn from a son to his mother.	Biography/Memoir
<i>The Double Helix: a Personal Account of the Discovery of the Structure of DNA</i>	Watson, James D.	Pioneering scientist in the discovery of the structure of DNA, Watson holds nothing back when revealing the petty sniping and backbiting among his colleagues, while acknowledging that he himself was a willing participant in the melodrama. This is the joy of <i>The Double Helix</i> - instead of a chronicle of stainless-steel heroes toiling away in their sparkling labs, Watson's chronicle gives readers an idea of what living science is like, warts and all.	Science Writing
<i>Edge of Nowhere</i>	George, Elizabeth	This compelling coming-of-age story, the first of an ongoing sequence of books set on Whidbey Island, has elements of mystery, the paranormal, and romance. Elizabeth George, bestselling author of the Inspector Lynley crime novels, brings her elegant style, intricate plotting, incisive characterization, and top-notch storytelling to her first book for teens.	Mystery/Crime
<i>Forks Over Knives</i>	Stone, Gene	What if one simple change could save you from heart disease, diabetes, and cancer? For decades, that question has fascinated a small circle of impassioned doctors and researchers—and now, their life-changing research is making headlines.	Non-Fiction

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<i>The Ghost Map: The Story of London's Most Terrifying Epidemic—and How It Changed Science, Cities...</i>	Johnson, Steven	The book chronicles the outbreak and spread of cholera in London during the summer of 1854 and the efforts of Reverend Henry Whitehead and Dr. John Snow to isolate the disease and put an end to the epidemic.	Science Writing
<i>The Hare with Amber Eyes</i>	De Waal, Edmund	In a fascinating combination of memoir, history and artistic appreciation, de Waal, himself a famous English potter, tells the story of a collection of <i>netsuke</i> , small Japanese carved creatures, that he inherited. He weaves together family history, the story of the Holocaust and one servant's brave resistance to the Nazi regime with an artist's appreciation of the objects for their own fascination and beauty. "The intelligence and creativity with which de Waal constructs a family history are what make this special book so supremely -winning." – <i>New York Times</i>	Non-Fiction
<i>Henry's Demons</i> *Suitable for grades 11-12	Cockburn, Patrick and Henry	This book, with chapters by Patrick Cockburn and his son, Henry, gives a more three-dimensional account of Henry's schizophrenia than any single-person account could. While we understand the devastation that the illness causes the family, we also have a clear account of the sense that Henry's world makes to him. In the end, there can be no easy answers, but this book presents a fitting testimonial to the love and patience of a family.	Biography/Memoir
<i>A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters .</i>	Barnes, Julian	A revisionist view of Noah's Ark, told by the stowaway woodworm. A chilling account of terrorists hijacking a cruise ship. A court case in 16th-century France in which the woodworm stands accused. A desperate woman's attempt to escape radioactive fallout on a raft. A thoughtful meditation on the novelist's responsibility regarding love. These and other stories make up Barnes's witty and sometimes acerbic retelling of the history of the world. Fascinating reading from the author of <i>Flaubert's Parrot</i> , but not for those wanting conventional plot.	Historical Fiction
<i>I Just Hope It's Lethal: Poems of Sadness, Madness and Joy</i>	Rosenberg, Liz		Poetry
<i>I Wouldn't Thank You for a Valentine: Poems for Young Feminists</i>	Duffy, Carol Ann		Poetry

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<i>The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks</i>	Skloot, Rebecca	"HeLa" cells, named after Henrietta Lacks, a poor African American woman born in 1920, were taken from a tumor removed during Lacks' treatment for cervical cancer. While she died from the disease, her cancer cells proved uncommonly robust, reproducing at a rapid rate. Years later, billions of these cells are used in laboratories around the world. A complex and fascinating drama -- a mixture of science and biography with profound themes of racism, ethics, and scientific illiteracy.	Science Writing
<i>Is That a Fish in Your Ear?: Translation and the Meaning of Everything</i>	Bellos, David	People speak different languages, and always have. The Ancient Greeks took no notice of anything unless it was said in Greek; the Romans made everyone speak Latin. Today, we all use translation to cope with the diversity of languages. Without translation there would be no world news, no repair manuals for cars or planes; we wouldn't even be able to put together flat-pack furniture. <i>Is That a Fish in Your Ear?</i> ranges across the human experience, from foreign films to philosophy, to show why translation is at the heart of what we do and who we are.	Non-Fiction
<i>Little Bee</i>	Cleave, Chris	A confrontation between a sixteen-year-old Nigerian orphan, called Little Bee, and a wealthy British couple on vacation, has life-changing consequences for everyone involved. The story is told from two points of view.	Contemporary Fiction
<i>Lovely, Dark and Deep</i>	McNamara, Amy	Since the night of the crash, Wren Wells has been running away. Though she lived through the accident that killed her boyfriend Patrick, the girl she used to be didn't survive. Instead of heading off to college as planned, Wren retreats to her father's studio in the far-north woods of Maine. Somewhere she can be alone.	Contemporary Fiction
<i>Luna</i>	Peters, Julie Anne	Regan's brother Liam can't stand the person he is during the day. Like the moon from whom Liam has chosen his female namesake, his true self, Luna, only reveals herself at night. In the secrecy of his basement bedroom Liam transforms himself into the beautiful girl he longs to be. National Book Award	Realistic Fiction
<i>The Magicians: A Novel</i>	Grossman, Lev	Like everyone else, precocious high school senior Quentin Coldwater assumes that magic isn't real, until he finds himself admitted to a very secretive and exclusive college of magic in upstate New York. There he indulges in the usual joys of college--and also receives a rigorous education in modern sorcery. Still, magic doesn't bring the happiness and adventure Quentin thought it would. After graduation, he and his friends stumble upon a secret that sets them on a remarkable journey...	Science Fiction/Fantasy
<i>Memoirs</i>	Neruda, Pablo	The memoirs of twentieth-century Latin American poet Pablo Neruda in which he discusses his childhood in Chile, his student years, his career in poetry and politics, his denunciation by the Chilean government in 1948, his escape from the country, and his return in 1952. In his editor's words, "the richest account we have of Latin American history, politics, and literature."	Biography/Memoir

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<i>The Name of the Star</i>	Johnson, Maureen	The day that Louisiana teenager Rory Deveau arrives in London to start a new life at boarding school is also the day a series of brutal murders breaks out over the city, killings that mimic the horrific Jack the Ripper spree of more than a century ago. Soon "Rippermania" takes hold of modern-day London, and the police are left with few leads and no witnesses. Except one. Rory spotted the man police believe to be the prime suspect. But she is the only one who saw him--the only one who can see him. And now Rory has become his next target.	Mystery/Crime
<i>The Night Circus</i>	Morgenstern, Erin	The circus arrives without warning. It is simply there. Within the black-and-white striped canvas tents is an utterly unique experience full of breathtaking amazements. Behind the scenes, a fierce competition is underway – duel between two young magicians, who have been trained since childhood expressly for this purpose by their mercurial instructors. "A Romeo and Juliet tale drenched in magic realism, <i>The Night Circus</i> defies both genres and expectations. In short, it's a showstopper." -- <i>The Boston Globe</i>	Science Fiction/Fantasy
<i>Outliers: the Story of Success</i>	Gladwell, Malcolm	Gladwell embarks on an intellectual journey through the world of "outliers"--the best and the brightest and the most successful. He investigates what makes high-achievers different by looking at their culture, family, generation, and the idiosyncratic experiences of their upbringing. Author of the best-selling books <i>Tipping Point</i> and <i>Blink</i> , Gladwell now transforms the way we view success.	Non-Fiction
<i>Paper Towns</i>	Green, John	When Margo Roth Spiegelman beckons Quentin Jacobsen in the middle of the night—dressed like a ninja and plotting an ingenious campaign of revenge—he follows her. Margo has always planned extravagantly, and, until now, she has always planned solo. After a lifetime of loving Margo from afar, things are finally looking up for Q . . . until day breaks and she has vanished.	Mystery/Crime
<i>The Poisoner's Handbook: Murder and the Birth of Forensic Medicine in Jazz Age New York</i>	Blum, Deborah	A fascinating Jazz Age tale of chemistry and detection, poison and murder, <i>The Poisoner's Handbook</i> is a page-turning account of a forgotten era. In early twentieth-century New York, poisons offered an easy path to the perfect crime. Science had no place in the Tammany Hall-controlled coroner's office, and corruption ran rampant. However, with the appointment of chief medical examiner Charles Norris in 1918, the poison game changed forever.	Science Writing
<i>Reality Check</i>	Abrahams, Peter	Cody sustains a serious knee injury that leaves him on the bench during the most important recruiting year in his high school career. With no college scholarship in sight, he drops out of school. When his rich girlfriend, Clea, is reported missing from her Vermont boarding school, he drives East to find her, endangering himself in the process.	Mystery/Crime
<i>Room</i>	Donoghue, Emma	Five-year-old Jack has spent his life living in an eleven-by-eleven foot space his mother calls Room. While Jack uses his imagination to create wondrous fantasies to entertain himself, his mother dreads the day her son begins to question why they must remain in Room and searches for an escape.	Contemporary Fiction

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Title	Author	Description	Genre
<i>The Secret Life of Bees</i>	Kidd, Sue Monk	Lily has grown up believing she accidentally killed her mother when she was four. Now fourteen, she yearns for her mother, and for forgiveness. Living on a peach farm in South Carolina with her father, she has only one friend: Rosaleen, a black servant whose sharp exterior hides a tender heart. However, South Carolina in the sixties full of segregation. When racial tension explodes one summer afternoon, and Rosaleen is arrested and beaten, Lily is compelled to act.	Historical Fiction
<i>The Signal and the Noise: Why So Many Predictions Fail — but Some Don't</i>	Silver, Nate	People love statistics. Statistics, however, do not always love them back. <i>The Signal and the Noise</i> , Nate Silver's brilliant and elegant tour of the modern science-slash-art of forecasting, shows what happens when Big Data meets human nature. Baseball, weather forecasting, earthquake prediction, economics, and polling. In all of these areas, Silver finds predictions gone bad thanks to biases, vested interests, and overconfidence. But he also shows where sophisticated forecasters have gotten it right (and occasionally been ignored to boot).	Non-Fiction
<i>The Silence of Murder</i>	Mackall, Dandi Daley	Coach Johnson is dead, and sixteen-year-old Hope Long is the only person who believes that her eighteen-year-old brother, Jeremy, is innocent. Sure, Jeremy is a little different—he's always been that way—but he's no killer. But there are no other suspects, so Hope must set out to find some herself and prove that Jeremy didn't kill Coach.	Mystery/Crime
<i>Steve Jobs</i>	Isaacson, Walter	“An unforgettable tale of a one-of-a-kind visionary. With a unique ability to meld arts and technology and an uncanny understanding of consumers' desires, Apple founder Steve Jobs (1955--2011) played a major role in transforming not just computer technology, but a variety of industries.”	Biography/Memoir
<i>Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers</i>	Roach, Mary	An oddly compelling, often hilarious exploration of the strange lives of our bodies postmortem. For two thousand years, cadavers have been involved in science's boldest strides and weirdest undertakings. They've tested France's first guillotines, ridden the NASA Space Shuttle, been crucified in a Parisian laboratory, and helped solve the mystery of TWA Flight 800. For every new surgical procedure cadavers have been there alongside surgeons, making history in their quiet way.	Science Writing
<i>Stormfront</i>	Butcher, Jim	For Harry Dresden, Chicago's only professional wizard, business, to put it mildly, stinks. So when the police bring him in to consult on a grisly double murder committed with black magic, Harry sees dollar signs. But where there's black magic, there's a black mage behind it. And now that mage knows Harry's name. A lively cast of characters populates this story, including gentleman gangster Johnny Marconi, his henchmen, a sexy female werewolf, and Bob, the talking skull.	Science Fiction/Fantasy

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Title	Author	Description	Genre
<i>The Strange Career of Jim Crow</i>	Woodward, C. Vann	This classic study of the history of the Jim Crow laws and of American race relations in general includes a new chapter on the tragic events that have occurred since 1965, including the Watts riots, the murder of Martin Luther King, white backlash encouraged by black activism, and the shift in national mood resulting from the election of Richard Nixon into the White House.	Non-Fiction
<i>Tell the Wolves I'm Home</i>	Brunt, Carol Rifka	Before her Uncle Finn died of an illness people don't want to talk about, 14-year-old June Elbus thought she was the center of his world. A famous and reclusive painter, Finn made her feel uniquely understood, privy to secret knowledge like how to really hear Mozart's <i>Requiem</i> or see the shape of negative space. After his death her family must face the fact of his illness (AIDS) and the life her parents kept secret.	Contemporary Fiction
<i>The Thirteenth Tale: A Novel</i>	Setterfield, Diane	Reclusive author Vida Winter has spent the past six decades penning a series of alternate lives for herself. Now old and ailing, she is ready to reveal the truth about her extraordinary existence and the violent and tragic past she has kept secret for so long. Margaret Lea, a young biographer, is mesmerized by the author's tale of gothic strangeness -- featuring the beautiful and willful Isabelle, the feral twins Adeline and Emmeline, a ghost, a governess, a topiary garden and a devastating fire.	Mystery/Crime
<i>This Same Sky: A Collection of Poems from Around the World</i>	Nye, Naoma Shihab		Poetry
<i>The Tiger's Wife</i>	Obreht, Tea	A tiger that's fled the zoo during World War II and the "deathless man" who collects the souls of the departed: two tales told to young medic Natalia by her grandfather that frame this bold, imaginative debut, effectively capturing the fearfulness that precipitated the recent fighting in the author's native Balkans. Obreht's storytelling is complex, humbling, and sheer magic.	Contemporary Fiction
<i>The Tragedy Paper</i>	Laban, Elizabeth	Debut novelist LaBan takes us into the private school culture as well as the heads of two charming yet very different teenage boys and their parallel love stories... Nonexistent parents, well-intentioned, likeable faculty on the periphery, elaborate dorm rooms with overstuffed closets, even the romantic, snow-covered campus all contribute to a setting that adds to the story's heft and intrigue.	Contemporary Fiction
<i>Unbowed: a Memoir.</i>	Maathai, Wangari	Nobel Prize winner Wangari Maathai recounts her extraordinary journey from her childhood in rural Kenya to the world stage. When Maathai founded the Green Belt Movement in 1977, she began a vital poor people's environmental movement, focused on the empowerment of women that soon spread across Africa. Persevering through run-ins with the Kenyan government and personal losses, and jailed and beaten on numerous occasions, Maathai continued to fight tirelessly to save Kenya's forests and to restore democracy to her beloved country.	Biography/Memoir

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Title	Author	Description	Genre
<i>Unbroken: a World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption</i>	Hillenbrand, Laura	On a May afternoon in 1943, an Army Air Forces bomber crashed into the Pacific Ocean and disappeared, leaving only a spray of debris and a slick of oil, gasoline, and blood. Then, on the ocean surface, a face appeared. It was that of a young lieutenant, the plane's bombardier, who was struggling to a life raft and pulling himself aboard. So began one of the most extraordinary odysseys of the Second World War.	Biography/Memoir
<i>Water for Elephants: a Novel</i>	Gruen, Sara	"Lively with historical details and unexpected turns.... <i>Water for Elephants</i> is a rich surprise, a delightful gem springing from a fascinating footnote to history that absolutely deserved to be minded." - <i>The Denver Post</i>	Historical Fiction
<i>What is the What</i>	Eggers, Dave	The title comes from an African proverb. After creating human beings, God offered them a choice of cattle or "the What." Most people chose cattle, but some people chose the What, and continue to search for this mysterious, potentially wonderful, potentially destructive option. Based on the life of Valentino Achak Deng, a refugee from the atrocities of Sudan (Darfur is the best-known example), who walked away from his village after its destruction by brutal brigands, beginning a journey to Kenya, Ethiopia, and ultimately America.	Contemporary Fiction
<i>What Was Lost</i>	O'Flynn, Catherine	This debut novel, nominated for the Man Booker Prize, is part mystery, part ghost story. Lisa, working as an assistant manager at a record store, teams up with security guard Kurt to investigate sightings of a little girl clutching a toy monkey that have begun to appear on security tapes. Lisa believes these sightings must have some link to the disappearance of ten-year-old Kate Meaney twenty years earlier--a crime that ruined her brother's life when he became a suspect.	Mystery/Crime
<i>Zeitoun</i>	Eggers, Dave	A national bestseller, the book tells the true story of one family, caught between America's two biggest policy disasters: the war on terror and the response to Hurricane Katrina.	Biography/Memoir