

MAST Academy

World History Summer Reading List

(Please choose ONE of the following books)

Category 1: Historical Fiction

(Stories set in the past that bring historical periods to life through compelling characters.)

1. ***The Book Thief*** by Markus Zusak

- **Reading Level:** Accessible to Moderate (YA Fiction)
- **Approximate Size:** ~550 pages
- **Necessary Information:** Set in Nazi Germany during World War II, this story is uniquely narrated by Death and follows Liesel Meminger, a young girl who finds solace from the horrors around her by stealing books and sharing them with others. It is a powerful story about the resilience of the human spirit, the power of words, and the moral complexities of life under a totalitarian regime.
- **Relevance to Course:** This novel provides a deeply human perspective on life for ordinary Germans during **Unit 3: A Century of Global Conflict**, directly connecting to our study of World War II and the rise of fascism.

2. ***I, Juan de Pareja*** by Elizabeth Borton de Treviño

- **Reading Level:** Accessible (YA Fiction)
- **Approximate Size:** ~180 pages
- **Necessary Information:** This Newbery Medal winner tells the story of Juan de Pareja, an enslaved African man owned by the famous Spanish painter Diego Velázquez in the 1600s. The story explores themes of art, race, religion, and friendship during the vibrant Spanish Golden Age.
- **Relevance to Course:** This is an excellent entry point into **Unit 1: A Connected World & New Ideas**, offering insight into the art of the European Renaissance/Baroque period and the complex social structures of a major global empire.

3. ***Chains*** by Laurie Halse Anderson

- **Reading Level:** Accessible (YA Fiction)

- **Approximate Size:** ~320 pages
- **Necessary Information:** The first book in the "Seeds of America" trilogy, this novel follows Isabel, a thirteen-year-old slave fighting for her freedom during the American Revolution in New York City. The story highlights the hypocrisy of a nation fighting for liberty while upholding the institution of slavery.
- **Relevance to Course:** This provides a crucial and often overlooked perspective on **Unit 2: An Age of Revolutions**. It connects directly to our study of the Enlightenment, natural rights, and the American Revolution.

Category 2: Narrative Non-Fiction & Biography

(True stories written in an engaging, story-like way.)

1. *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank

- **Reading Level:** Accessible to Moderate (Primary Source Diary)
- **Approximate Size:** ~280 pages
- **Necessary Information:** The world-famous diary of a Jewish teenager forced into hiding with her family in Nazi-occupied Amsterdam during the Holocaust. This is a primary source document that provides an intimate look at the daily realities, fears, and hopes of those persecuted during the war.
- **Relevance to Course:** This is an essential text for **Unit 3: A Century of Global Conflict**. It provides a personal and unforgettable account of the Holocaust, a key topic in our study of World War II.

2. *Endurance: Shackleton's Incredible Voyage* by Alfred Lansing

- **Reading Level:** Moderate to Challenging (Narrative Non-Fiction)
- **Approximate Size:** ~300 pages
- **Necessary Information:** This is the gripping, true story of Ernest Shackleton's 1914 Antarctic expedition. When their ship, the *Endurance*, is trapped and crushed by ice, the crew must survive for over a year on ice floes and undertake a perilous journey to safety. It is a thrilling tale of leadership and human survival against impossible odds.
- **Relevance to Course:** While set slightly later, this book perfectly captures the spirit of exploration and human endurance that we will discuss in **Unit 1** and provides context for the era leading into **Unit 3**.

Category 3: Graphic Novels

(Complex historical narratives told through sequential art.)

1. *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood* by Marjane Satrapi

- **Reading Level:** Accessible but with Mature Themes (Graphic Novel Memoir)
- **Approximate Size:** ~160 pages
- **Necessary Information:** This is the author's autobiographical story of growing up in Iran during and after the Islamic Revolution. It provides a personal perspective on revolution, war, culture clash, and the challenges of finding one's identity between Eastern and Western cultures.
- **Relevance to Course:** This brilliant memoir directly relates to the themes of revolution in **Unit 2** and the modern global conflicts and cultural shifts we will explore in **Unit 4**.

2. *Maus I: A Survivor's Tale* by Art Spiegelman

- **Reading Level:** Moderate with Very Mature Themes (Graphic Novel Memoir)
- **Approximate Size:** ~160 pages
- **Necessary Information:** A Pulitzer Prize-winning masterpiece in which the author interviews his father, a Polish Jew and Holocaust survivor. The story depicts Jews as mice, Germans as cats, and Poles as pigs, using the graphic novel format to explore the horrors of the Holocaust and its generational impact.
- **Relevance to Course:** Like Anne Frank's diary, *Maus* is an essential and powerful text for **Unit 3**, offering a unique and deeply moving way to understand the Holocaust and the experience of its survivors.