

Summer Reading 2009

All students attending The Sharon Academy for academic year 2009-10 are required to complete three books for summer reading. The first title must be one of the following three books. Time for discussion of these books will be built into the first or second day of school. Students are to come prepared to discuss.

At the center of "Mountains Beyond Mountains" stands Paul Farmer. Doctor, Harvard professor, renowned infectious-disease specialist, anthropologist, the recipient of a MacArthur "genius" grant, world-class Robin Hood, Farmer was brought up in a bus and on a boat, and in medical school found his life's calling: to diagnose and cure infectious diseases and to bring the lifesaving tools of modern medicine to those who need them most. This magnificent book shows how radical change can be fostered in situations that seem insurmountable, and it also shows how a meaningful life can be created, as Farmer—brilliant, charismatic, charming, both a leader in international health and a doctor who finds time to make house calls in Boston and the mountains of Haiti—blasts through convention to get results. (bookbrowse.com)

"Outliers" is a non-fiction book written by Malcolm Gladwell and published by Little, Brown and Company on November 18, 2008. In "Outliers", Gladwell examines the factors that contribute to high levels of success. To support his thesis, he examines the causes of why the majority of Canadian ice hockey players are born in the first few months of the calendar year, how Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates achieved his extreme wealth, and how two people with exceptional intelligence, Christopher Langan and J. Robert Oppenheimer, end up with such vastly different fortunes. Throughout the publication, Gladwell repeatedly mentions the "10,000-Hour Rule", claiming that the key to success in any field is simply a matter of practicing a specific task for a total of 10,000 hours. (Wikipedia)

"Animal, Vegetable, Miracle" by Barbara Kingsolver and family. Part memoir, part journalistic investigation, this book tells the story of how our family was changed by one year of deliberately eating food produced in the place where we live. Barbara wrote the central narrative; Steven's sidebars dig deeper into various aspects of food-production science and industry; Camille's brief essays offer a nineteen-year-old's perspective on the local-food project, plus nutritional information, meal plans and recipes. (animalvegetablemiracle.com)

Division II - Remaining Reading

In addition to reading one of the three titles above, Division II students have two more reading tasks to accomplish.

1. Choose a classic and read it. As you read it, jot down or highlight quotes from the book, preferably quotes which relate to a theme or a message you believe the author is trying to express. You should have no fewer than ten quotes, although it would not be impossible to have thirty or forty! These quotes will be collected in class on August 31. Those who highlight will simply turn in their books.

2. Choose a biography or an autobiography of someone you admire or believe may be a role model for others. As you read, keep this question in mind: What beliefs, ideals, and convictions seem to guide this person's life? Do they change over time, or remain consistent? What events in the person's life created or affected these beliefs? Take notes on what you read, including quotes where applicable. Xeroxed material is okay. These notes will be shared in class on September 2.

Charlie McMeekin is available at cmcmeekin@sharonacademy.net to talk with you if you're worried about your choices. For instance, if you're not sure a book is a classic, just e-mail me! Or, if you're having trouble getting a grip on a book's central idea or theme, I'm available. The same is true for autobiographies and biographies. If you want input, let me know. Stephanie is also available for advice on this book, and can be reached at sgergely@sharonacademy.net

Happy reading to you!