

Summer Reading Mission Statement

The intent of the Valley Regional High School summer reading program is to challenge students to become life-long readers and learners by encouraging them to read during non-instructional time. Through this reading program the school promotes intellectual stimulation, social awareness, diversity of viewpoints, and independent thinking.

Link to the VRHS Academic Expectations:
Students will comprehend written language
Students will speak effectively

VRHS Summer Reading books are on special display at the VRHS library

Books are available at VRHS, local libraries and the following bookstores:

Essex Books - Essex
R.J. Julia Booksellers - Madison
Borders- Waterford - West Hartford
Barnes and Noble - West Hartford

Books may also be purchased from online sellers such as www.amazon.com.
Most are available in paperback.

2009 Faculty and Student Committee

Madeleine Black
Mary Buchanan
Samantha Cannon
Patrick Campbell
Rachel Carlson
Anne Marie Carlson
Carolyn Crehan
Caitlin DeGrand
Maeve Flynn

Natalie Gill
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Olivia Mueller
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Joanna Najarian-Garb
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Amelia Penniman

Coral Rawn
Katelyn Renzoni
Kristie Schmidt
Sarah Smalley
Anthony
Van Wyngaarden
Brittany West
Hannah Wolfe

The faculty would like to thank the students on the summer reading committee for their time, insight and reviews. We appreciate your commitment to VRHS's summer reading program.

Valley Regional High School
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"A mind once stretched by a new idea never regains its original dimensions."
Anonymous

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Developing the summer reading list is both a joy and a challenge, and I am thrilled that student readers have once again enthusiastically contributed to the process.

We started with a list of over 75 books spontaneously generated by teachers and students. The process of reading and weeding then began. After many enthusiastic and engaging conversations between faculty and students a well-rounded list of 27 books finally emerged. I am pleased to say that the work of the committee is, again, commendable. I appreciate both the student and faculty commitment to an outstanding list.

The committee attempts to select books encompassing multiple points of view, different cultures, and a myriad of experiences with a wide range of appeal. As you look over the list, know that summer reading is a graduation requirement, so please encourage your student to choose a book that will keep him or her engaged and perhaps present a new idea or different perspective.

This booklet reviews the available books and explains in detail the summer reading process. Summer reading projects (changes have been made) will be presented during the first week of school in your student's C.O.R.E. group. Please review this booklet with your student and encourage him/her to get the books of his/her choice early in the summer.

Many interesting books did not make the list. However, **the second book**, which is also a required part of summer reading, may be of your student's choice. This "free read" should challenge your student and provide insight for meaningful conversation when we return to school in the fall. The second book has been incorporated into the rubric,

and titles will be collected as data for assessment purposes; please go over this information with your student.

This booklet can be accessed online through our website at www.vrhs.com. Please call the school if you have any questions. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Ian Neviaser
Principal

Carolyn Crehan
English Teacher
Coordinator, Summer Reading Committee

Summer Reading Instructions for First Book

Participation in summer reading is a graduation requirement

Required First Book- Oral Presentation- choose from the included list

1. Preview your book selection by visiting the library display. Review the summer reading booklet, including reviews of each book.
2. Choose one book from your level from the Summer Reading list. Your level is the English class you will be in for the 2009-2010 school year. For example, if you will be in a level 2/3 English class, you should choose a level 2/3 book. If you would like to read up and choose a level 1 book, you may do so. If, however, you will be in a level 1 English class, you may NOT read a level 2/3 book for your required first book.
3. Read the attached school-wide oral presentation rubric to understand how you will be assessed.
4. Review the list of ideas for **projects** and select one lending itself to your particular book.
5. Keep in mind you must explain why you chose each image or event to present. Your choices should reflect one or more of the following:
 - Plot
 - Characters
 - Setting
 - Theme (What message is the author trying to convey?)
 - Significance (How does this connect to your own life and personal experiences?)
6. Summer Reading projects will be due on the third day of school and should be brought in at that time.

Summer Reading Instructions for Second Book

Participation in summer reading is a graduation requirement.

Required Second Book- Book Talk- Any appropriate high school level book *Direct any questions about appropriate choices to a summer reading committee member*

1. Please review the summer reading **second book** section of the rubric to see what information to note while reading your choice book. You will be assessed on the summer reading rubric and **MUST** meet the requirement in order to pass summer reading.
2. Be prepared to participate in a "Book Talk". For the book talk, provide the author and title of the book as well as a brief summary of the plot, characters, setting, theme and significance. **State your opinion of the book, whether or not you would recommend it to someone else and why.**

Options for Summer Reading Oral Presentation Projects

Scrapbook- Create a scrapbook that represents ten major events in your book. Use a page or more to depict each event, and also use one quote/passage from the book to depict each event (for a total of ten pages and ten quotes). On each page, the visual material should highlight the plot, characters, setting, theme, and significance of the event. You should be prepared to present a clear explanation for why you chose each image.

Diary- Present a diary as if you were one of the characters in your book. Select a minimum of five quotes and describe or act out the events you are witnessing and experiencing. Diary presentations should relate to five specific events, taken from the beginning middle and end of the book. Language used should reflect the culture of the character.

T. V. Guide- Your book is to be turned into a five or six part mini-series. Prepare the TV guide entry for each night's episode. You must create enough episode entries to cover your entire book. Each synopsis must contain at least five sentences. You must design a cover for your T.V. guide. This should depict the characters, plot, setting, theme and significance of the book.

Web Page- Design your own web page detailing your book choice. Your web page must include links that depict the characters, plot, setting, theme, and significance of the book. Each link must contain a minimum of one paragraph explaining the five topics in the previous sentence. You must also choose three significant quotes from your book that you feel best represent the overall story.

I-Movie- You must turn in a script to accompany your I-Movie, and you may choose a few of your friends to assist you as you create this project. Your script should follow your movie exactly. Be sure you portray the characters, plot, setting, theme, and significance of your book. Your I-Movie must be longer than three minutes and shorter than five.

Be Creative! Remember, your project must support your oral presentation.

Participation in summer reading is a graduation requirement!

FOR INFORMATION ON SUMMER READING 2009:

****GO TO VRHS.COM – CLICK ON THE SUMMER READING LINK****

SUMMER READING IS DUE ON THE THIRD DAY OF SCHOOL

2009 Summer Reading Selections

Author	Title	Genre	Level
Adams, Richard	Watership Down	Fiction	1
Cashore, Kristin	The Graceling	Fantasy	1, 2
Collins, Suzanne	The Hunger Games	Dystopia	All
Connelly, Michael	The Lincoln Lawyer	Mystery	All
Crichton, Michael	Prey	Thriller	1,2
Decker, Shawn	My Pet Virus	Comedy	All
Deuker, Carl	Gym Candy	Fiction	2, 3
Dorris, Michael	A Yellow Raft in Blue Water	Fiction	1
Godwin, Peter	When a Crocodile Eats the Sun	Memoir	1, 2
Harrar, George	Not as Crazy as I Seem	Fiction	2, 3
Hopkins, Ellen	Burned	Fiction	2, 3
Khadra, Yasmina	The Sirens of Baghdad	Fiction	1, 2
Kingsbury, Suzanne	The Summer Fletcher Greel Loved Me	Fiction	1, 2
Lansens, Lori	The Girls	Fiction	1,2
McCormick, Patricia	Sold	Fiction	2, 3
McGrath, Jeremy	Wide Open: A Life in Supercross	Auto-biography	2, 3
Murdoch, Catherine	Dairy Queen	Fiction	2, 3
Myron, Vicki	Dewey: The Small-Town Cat Who Touched the World	Nonfiction	All
Nelson, Pete	Left for Dead	Nonfiction	2, 3
Patterson, James	Maximum Ride The Angel Experiment	Sci-Fi	2, 3
Pearce, Fred	Confessions of an Eco-Sinner	Nonfiction	1,2
Peters, Julie Ann	Luna	Fiction	2, 3
Raddatz, Martha	The Long Road Home	Nonfiction	1, 2
Shepherd, Adam	Scratch Beginnings	Nonfiction	All
Sherwood, Ben	The Survivors Club	Nonfiction	All
Tammet, Daniel	Born on a Blue Day	Memoir	1,2
Zusak, Markus	I am the Messenger	Fiction	2, 3

2009 VRHS Summer Reading List- Faculty and Student Reviews

Adams, Richard. *Watership Down* The story follows a warren of Berkshire rabbits fleeing the destruction of their home by a land developer. As they search for a safe haven, skirting danger at every turn, we become acquainted with the band and its compelling culture and mythos. Adams has crafted a touching, involving world in the dirt and scrub of the English countryside, complete with its own folk history and language (the book comes with a "lapine" glossary, a guide to rabbitese). As much about freedom, ethics, and human nature as it is about a bunch of bunnies looking for a warm hidey-hole and some mates, *Watership Down* will continue to make the transition from classroom desk to bedside table for many generations to come. -Paul Hugh

Cashore, Kristin. *The Graceling* This story of self-realization and courage makes the reader feel everything the book has to offer. It starts with the introduction of the main character, Katsa. In Katsa's world there are a certain number of people who are born with beyond natural abilities. They are marked with eyes of two different colors. They are called Gracelings. Katsa just happens to be one of them, graced with one blue eye and one green eye, as well as the ability to kill. Her uncle, King Randa, uses her as his own personal assassin, a job which repulses her, but she is forced to do. It is then the secret Council that Katsa has established learns of a mischievous king named Leck who is causing harm to his kingdom. Soon after learning this, Katsa starts out on an adventure that will test her courage and bring about self-realization. It is on this adventure that she is joined by Po, a man who is also a Graceling, but he has the ability to fight. Together they set off on an adventure that could lead them into being heroes or finding their deaths. This story of adventure, romance, and self-discovery is a great read! -Rachel

Collins, Suzanne. *The Hunger Games* Once each year, the names of one boy and one girl are randomly selected from each of the 12 districts of Panem. These 24 people, whose ages range from 12 – 18, must compete in the "Hunger Games," a brutal reality game of skill and wit, where the winner is the last one alive. Katniss Everdeen, 16, lives a life of poverty on the outskirts of town with her mother and 12-year old sister, Primrose. The day of choosing has arrived once again, and Primrose's name has been drawn from the hat. Katniss at once volunteers to take Primrose's place in the games to protect her younger sister. The second name from the district is drawn, and Peeta Mellmark, a 16-year old, middle-class son of the town bakery takes his place alongside Katniss. As they are introduced to the grueling struggle of the games, their main concern is outwitting their competitors for the ultimate reward of staying alive. – Madeleine

Independent, quirky, strong-minded Katniss Everdeen knows how to run a household. She cooks, cleans, hunts, and watches after family, all in the same day. She also grows up in the poverty-stricken District 12. When Katniss takes her sister's place in the "Hunger Games," she is forced into a harsh environment filled with new challenges every day. The ultimate challenge is to fight to the death, while being televised for all the world to see. Katniss builds bonds, both friendly and romantic, during her journey, and she finds she is stronger than she imagined. But, will Katniss win the games? Recommended by both males and females, *The Hunger Games* is a page-turning, adrenaline-rush thriller! -Sophy

Connelly, Michael. *The Lincoln Lawyer* Michael Haller is a Los Angeles defense attorney who rides from courthouse to courthouse in his "office," a Lincoln Town Car. He mostly represents lowlife thugs, prostitutes, and outlaw bikers. He lives from paycheck to paycheck and hopes for the "franchise case" that will bring in a big payday. Such a case appears when a wealthy real estate agent, accused of beating and threatening the life of a prostitute, hires him. The twists and turns will keep you guessing about who is really innocent and who is guilty. - Anthony

Crichton, Michael (in memoriam). *Prey* In the Nevada desert, an experiment has gone horribly wrong. A cloud of nanoparticles – micro-robots – has escaped from the Xymos laboratory, a corporation dedicated to maximizing the potential of biotechnology. This cloud is self-sustaining and self-reproducing. It is intelligent and learns from the experience. For all practical purposes, it is alive. It has been programmed as a predator, to seek out malfunctioning genetic mutation and disease within the cells of our bodies. As its mission corrupts, it evolves swiftly, becoming more deadly with each passing hour. Every attempt to destroy it has failed. And, we are now its prey.

Prey is a cautionary tale about emerging technologies within the scientific community, and as such, revisits Crichton's favorite haunting grounds. Best known for blending science and theater, he brought us such greats as *Jurassic Park* and *The Andromeda Strain*, always asking, "What if?"

Crichton passed away earlier this year. His books have sold over 150 million copies worldwide, and many have been adapted into films. In 1994, he became the only creative artist to ever have works simultaneously charting at #1 in television, as creator of *ER*; and in film, with the adaptation of *Jurassic Park*; and in book sales, with *Disclosure*.
– Ms. Schmidt

Decker, Shawn. *My Pet Virus* It is not often one comes by a book that deals with (not just complains about) having a life defining and incurable disease. *My Pet Virus* tackles the AIDS virus and makes the reader laugh out loud with an alternate perspective of a life's journey with HIV and AIDS. This memoir will bring tears to your eyes as you laugh at the adventures and misadventures of Shawn Decker. The way he speaks frankly about his life, challenges, hopes and dreams, while keeping a positive mental outlook is truly inspirational. *My Pet Virus* is a serious look at how the HIV and AIDS virus can impact a life, but at its core, it is a story of how to look at a situation and make the most of it – no matter what the outcome may be. – Ms. Smalley

Deuker, Carl. *Gym Candy* is about a football running back, Mike Johnson, who uses steroids. The overwhelming pressure from his dad to be the best eventually catches up with him and he needs help to be a bigger, faster, stronger player. Mike turns to steroids after going to the gym one day where his trainer gives him some of the drug to try. Throughout the book, Mike battles the ups and downs of his addiction. This realistic story goes behind the scenes of a steroid addict and shows some of the side effects of these harmful drugs. – Anne Marie

Dorris, Michael. *A Yellow Raft in Blue Water* tells the tale of three generations of women who tell their stories and feelings regarding life's trials and tribulations. The stories span three generations and three different lives of three enchanting women. Fifteen-year old, half black, half Native American Rayona struggles to find her place in the world. Rayona's Native-American mother, Christine, is consumed by her decisions and resentments that face her and the ones she loves. Ida, the mysterious grandmother whose past is filled with haunting betrayals and startling secrets, shape the way Rayona and Christine live their lives. *A Yellow Raft in Blue Water* is an enchanting story filled with the trials and tribulations that many readers can relate to. The world that Michael Dorris creates for these three women will jump right off the page and into your heart. – Caitlin

Godwin, Peter. *When a Crocodile Eats the Sun* This book about war-ravaged Zimbabwe is a must read for those who enjoy a true story about the reality of war. Under Robert Mugabe's iron-fisted rule, white Zimbabweans are having an even more difficult time getting by. Peter Codwin's memoir is about his trials and tribulations as he tries to protect his family and his country from deadly fights between veterans and rebels, the fight to save animals, and the death of Peter's father. – Ryan

Harrar, George. *Not as Crazy as I Seem* tells the story of sophomore, Devon Brown, whose life is controlled by his obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). Devon won't eat in his school cafeteria or sit on his shrink's couch. His room is freakishly clean for a 15 year-old boy, but he doesn't see himself as crazy. When Devon and his family move to Boston, Devon meets people at his new, exclusive private school who, incredibly, want to be his friend. Devon, however, soon encounters many problems and learns that in order to solve them, he has to confront his OCD, the greatest problem of all. - Amelia

Hopkins, Ellen. *Burned* If you like books that aren't structured like normal books, you'll like this one. Written in verse, *Burned* is about a Mormon girl who is tired of her lifestyle, so she rebels. Her family sends her away to live with her aunt where her life changes for the better. Don't be fooled by the length of this book. It will capture your attention and move quickly to the end. - Katelyn

Khadra, Yasmina. *The Sirens of Baghdad* This novel brings the reader into Iraq to experience the horrors and tragedies that occurred during the Second Gulf War. The reader follows the story of a young Bedouin man forced to witness countless innocent deaths and the humiliation of his people by the American forces. In this atmosphere of war, the naïve Bedouin tries to comprehend the violence around him. But, consumed with a desire for revenge, he turns to a radical group in Baghdad. Confused and angry, the Bedouin is willing to go "all the way, without flinching" in an attack potentially worse than 9/11. *The Sirens of Baghdad* is a powerful story of the moral conflicts caused by violence and war. - Maeve

Kingsbury, Suzanne. *The Summer Fletcher Greel Loved Me* Summer in Houser Banks, Mississippi for Haley Ellyson means riding horses, spending time with her father, and being chased by helpless boys who have fallen in love. Haley, however, has no interest in these juveniles due to her infatuation with her father's close friend, Bo Dickens. But, when a college prep-school graduate returns home for the summer, Haley realizes her full capability to love. With Fletcher, her friend, Riley White, and his girlfriend, a black, blues-singing young woman named Crystal, Haley journeys through underlying issues of racism and her confusion about love, all the while carrying a detrimental secret that has the potential of ruining lives. - Paige

Lansens, Lori. *The Girls* is an excellent read for anyone who enjoys a sad, interesting, and insightful novel. This book describes the life of the oldest conjoined twins, Rose and Ruby. These two sisters/best friends are joined at the head and each one writes about their experiences. The life journey of these two sisters, expressed throughout the pages of the book, is like nothing ever described before. *The Girls* is an unforgettable novel and would appeal to anyone who would like to read an inspiring story. - Chelsey

Rose and Ruby Darlen are two conjoined twins joined at the head and sharing the same blood supply. They are, in more ways than one, inseparable. Right after their birth, their young, single mother abandoned them as fast as possible, leaving the nurse who helped deliver them becoming the mother to Rose and Ruby. Since Rose and Ruby have a common blood supply, with hundreds of veins and skull bones shared, it is physically impossible to separate the two of them. Living a life in a small country forces them to live a "normal" life. Or, at least try. - Hannah

McCormick, Patricia. *Sold* Mainly for the empowered feminist, *Sold* is about a girl's forced journey into prostitution. Lied to, abused, and raped, Lakshmi finds the will and heart to feel true happiness in the Happiness House. Though she is challenged with new, dirty customers, lies, and bruises every day, she manages to stand up for herself and her dream: to go back to a hope filled, tin-roofed home. Will she find enough strength and courage to finally run away from her brothel? Read *Sold* to find out. - Sophy

McGrath, Jeremy with Chris Palmer. *Wide Open: A Life in Supercross* Jeremy McGrath, one of the world's best Supercross champions, explains his success and offers tips for young riders. Jeremy takes the reader from his rather humble beginnings with no sponsorship and just his parents' support to his sponsorship from Kawasaki and every other bike company to starting his own team to his retirement. Discussing his hard work and his mistakes, Jeremy makes clear what is needed to be successful. – Ms. Najarian-Garb

Murdoch, Catherine. *Dairy Queen* Don't be fooled by the title - it isn't about ice cream. *Dairy Queen* is an excellent, quick, humorous read for the beach or poolside. If you like romance, then you'll love this modern tale of a not-so-obvious couple falling in love. D. J. wants to play on the football team, but she has to work on her family's dairy farm. D. J. deals with her troubles in a realistic, honest way. It is a heartwarming, inspiring, and unique book. – Lindsay

If you are looking for a quick and fun summer read, this is the book for you. Fifteen year-old, D.J., who has grown up in a football family living in Washington, has been given the job of getting Brian, the quarterback of her high school's rival team into shape. One thing about her and her family, though, is that they do not talk with each other. Her two older brothers have deserted their family, leaving the responsibility on D.J. She has kept quiet about her family, but somehow she cannot help telling everything to Brian. When she decides to go out for her school football team, she doesn't know what will happen, but she is tired of doing what she is supposed to do, instead of what she wants to do. – Sam

Myron, Vicki. *Dewey: The Small Town Cat Who Touched the World* Attention all cat lovers. If you are looking for a heartwarming story about a little library cat, then *Dewey* is the story for you. *Dewey* tells the story of a kitten found frozen in a library drop box on a cold winter morning. The librarians take in the kitten and make Dewey the official library cat. Dewey is a special cat who knows when people are happy and when they need a friend. Enjoy the adventures of Dewey and discover the warmth and compassion he brings to the library. – Ashley

Nelson, Pete. *Left for Dead* On July 30th, 1945, the USS Indianapolis was torpedoed by a Japanese submarine after delivering high-priority materials for the creation of the atomic bomb. Within fourteen minutes the ship sank towards the seafloor and, with it, a thousand men in shark-infested waters. Their stories of tough losses and survival were all put aside when Captain Charles Butler McVay was court-martialed for hazarding his ship. It has been 50 years since the injustice, and now a young boy named Hunter Scott has begun a journey to clear this captain's good name and the honor of the men who served alongside him. – Keir

Left for Dead by Pete Nelson is the true and awe-inspiring story of the survivors of the U.S.S. Indianapolis. The Indianapolis was sunk by a Japanese submarine in the middle of the Pacific Ocean in 1945. Out of the 1200 men on board, 316 managed to survive for four days. This story tells about the hardships of those survivors while at sea, ranging from dehydration, heat exhaustion, hallucinations and shark attacks. The book focuses on a few select people and their lives throughout the entire ordeal. – Tyler

Patterson, James. *Maximum Ride: The Angel Experiment* A high paced adventure novel, this is the first in a series by acclaimed novelist James Patterson. *Maximum Ride* is an ordinary kid, except for one thing: Max is a mutant, a genetic experiment from a shady organization known as "The School." Max is the leader of a group of winged children, known as the flock. In addition to wings, Max and the flock have super strength, ultra light bones, and other abilities. This book follows Max as the flock fights to liberate one of their own who has been captured by "The School." This book is an exciting, quick read for boys or girls. – Patrick

Pearce, Fred. *Confessions of An Eco-Sinner* Do you ever wonder about where the computer we all rely on comes from? Or, all of the spices we love in our foods? Or, how about where all of our garbage goes? Fred Pearce answers all of these questions and more. He has created a biography of where our simple life objects come from, such as aluminum for soda cans. This book allows you to value and appreciate what you have. Many students play a sport – did you know that in Dhaka young women work “11-hour” shifts to make brand name sports’ clothes? The next time you toss your valuables around, think about all of the hard work that went into those clothes. Pick up this book to learn about this and other fascinating information. – Farishta

Peters, Julie Ann. *Luna* Regan Liam’s sister narrates this colorful story about her life, which happens to revolve around Luna, Liam’s true self. Only revealing Luna during the cover of darkness, she remains trapped in Liam’s teenage boy body during the day. With desperate attempts to shield her brother, Regan soon feels like she hasn’t had a chance to live her life the way she would like to because she is always protecting her brother. Liam realizes he must reveal his female self in order to make Regan live her own life and stop worrying about her brother’s. This heart-wrenching tale is one that will certainly not be forgotten. – Caitlin

Raddatz, Martha. *The Long Road Home* Very reminiscent of *Black Hawk Down*, *The Long Road Home* is the true account of a 2003 battle in Sadr City between American soldiers and Iraqi insurgents. A few hours into a routine patrol (part of what was considered largely a peace-keeping mission), an American platoon got pinned down in an alleyway by thousands of armed Iraqis. The soldiers sent to rescue the platoon were shocked by the size and organization of the Iraqi force, which fiercely and fearlessly attacked the convoys of largely unprotected vehicles. The hour-by-hour description of how the soldiers fought their way through the streets to rescue their stranded comrades is interspersed with anecdotes about the soldiers’ families waiting anxiously back home for word about their loved ones. Reporter Martha Raddatz’s detailed, moving account shows readers the reality of modern warfare through the eyes of soldiers and their families. – Ms. Giuliano

Shepard, Adam. *Scratch Beginnings* Adam Shepard’s plan was simple: Carry a sleeping bag, the clothes on his back, and \$25 in cash; then, enter a homeless shelter in Charleston, South Carolina to determine if he could have \$2,500, a working car, and a furnished apartment in one year. Simple turned out to be a little more difficult than Shepard thought as he takes low-paying jobs from labor companies who are less than enthusiastic about hiring homeless people. To Shepard’s surprise, however, he learns to depend on his fellow shelter residents for inspiration and guidance. Readers will not only share in Shepard’s trials and tribulations, but they will also see a side of homelessness that should be seen by all. – Mrs. Crehan

Sherwood, Ben. *The Survivors Club* A fascinating and engaging read. This book tells true stories of survivors in all types of situations: from being attacked by a cougar to bailing out of an airplane over the ocean to cancer victims. These stories are accompanied by a scientific approach as to why that person survived to tell the tale. Best of all, this book helps you to discover what type of survivor you are, whether it is a fighter, a connector, a realist, and more. It also tells you what your top three personality attributes are that would be helpful in a survivor situation. For those of you that want to learn about how people adapt to their hardships and a little bit about how you would survive, I would highly recommend reading this book. – Patrick

Tammet, Daniel. *Born on a Blue Day* is an extremely unique exploration of the extraordinary mind of Daniel Tammet, a man with savant syndrome. This book offers a descriptive look into his challenges as a child and his struggle to come to terms with his condition. Daniel learns to function successfully and can even give us an exclusive view into his thoughts, abilities, and obstacles throughout his life. – Erin

Zusak, Markus. *I am the Messenger* Ed Kennedy is an underage cab driver in the city, bored of the life he's living and tired of what he hasn't done. He's tired of being in love with his best friend, Audrey, and how his mother doesn't accept him. He yearns for a life more exciting than playing cards with his friends and caring for Doorman, his coffee addicted dog. But, when Ed unintentionally stops a bank robbery, his world gets turned upside down. Mysterious playing cards appear in his mailbox, and strange characters watch his every move. Chosen to be the messenger, Ed must make his way through the city helping the people he is assigned, but all the while trying to solve his greatest mystery- who is behind it all?" - Olivia
