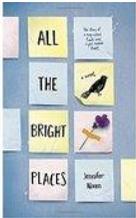
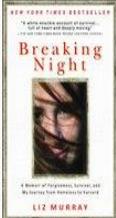
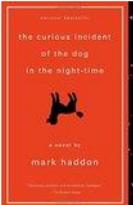
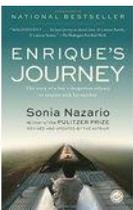
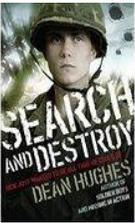
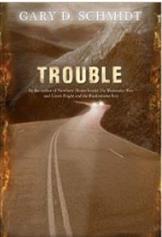


## A Community of Readers: Grade 9 Book List

**Note to Students:** These books were selected based upon the 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading survey taken in April 2016, relevant social, emotional, and political issues of our current society, and themes that complement our freshmen curriculum. They can be found at our Westfield Athenaeum or purchased on Amazon.com or Barnes and Noble. Please feel free to investigate a title further by reading reviews and more in-depth summaries.

The purpose of summer reading is to encourage you to find books that inspire or foster a love of reading and to practice literacy skills that typically weaken during the summer break. Having read one of the texts, you will return to high school in the fall ready to participate in academic activities and discussion where you will be able to share your thoughts on ideas that the story promotes; however, please do not stop reading at just one book. Give your mind a workout each and every day so that it remains strong and healthy.

	<p><b>Title and Author:</b> <i>All the Bright Places</i> Jennifer Niven</p> <p><b>Topics:</b> realistic fiction; grief; depression; relationships</p>	<p>Theodore Finch constantly thinks of ways he might kill himself. Violet Markey tries to live for the future, even after her sister's death. When Finch and Violet meet on the ledge of the bell tower at school, it's unclear who saves whom. And when they pair up on a project to discover the "natural wonders" of their state, both Finch and Violet make more important discoveries about themselves. But as Violet's world grows, Finch's begins to shrink. Niven relays the complex thought processes of these two teens with all their emotional turmoil and insecurities.</p>
	<p><b>Title and Author:</b> <i>Breaking Night: A Memoir of Forgiveness, Survival, and My Journey from Homeless to Harvard</i> Liz Murray</p> <p><b>Topics:</b> memoir; homelessness; poverty; substance abuse; determination</p>	<p>Liz Murray, born to loving but drug-addicted parents in the Bronx, found herself living on the streets at the age of fifteen when her family finally unraveled. She learned to scrape by, foraging for food and riding subways all night to have a warm place to sleep. When Liz's mother died of AIDS, she decided to take control of her own destiny. Liz squeezed four years of high school into two, often completing her assignments in the hallways and subway stations where she slept. She won a New York Times scholarship and ultimately made it into Harvard. <i>Breaking Night</i> is an unforgettable and beautifully written story of one young woman's indomitable spirit to survive and prevail, against all odds.</p>
	<p><b>Title and Author:</b> <i>The Curious Incident of a Dog in the Night-time</i> Mark Haddon</p> <p><b>Topics:</b> mystery; humor; autism; crime; family conflict</p>	<p>Being autistic, Christopher John Francis Boone knows all the countries of the world and their capitals and every prime number up to 7,057. He relates well to animals but has no understanding of human emotions. He cannot stand to be touched. And he detests the color yellow. But, but when initially blamed for the death of his neighbor's dog, he is determined to find the killer. In the process, he must confront truths about his own family's conflicts. This book is a comedy, a heartbreaker, a mystery story, and a novel of exceptional literary merit that is great fun to read.</p>
	<p><b>Title and Author:</b> <i>Enrique's Journey</i> Sonia Nazario</p> <p><b>Topics:</b> non-fiction; immigration; family conflict; poverty</p>	<p>Based on the Pulitzer winning news feature series in the Los Angeles Times, this true story recounts the unforgettable quest of a Honduran boy looking for his mother eleven years after she is forced to leave her starving family to find work in the United States. Braving unimaginable peril, Enrique travels through hostile worlds full of gangs, bandits, and corrupt cops. But he pushes forward, relying on his wit, courage, hope, and the kindness of strangers.</p>
	<p><b>Title and Author:</b> <i>The Impossible Knife of Memory</i> Laurie Halse Anderson</p> <p><b>Topics:</b> realistic fiction; substance abuse; depression; relationships</p>	<p>Hayley Kincaid and her father, Andy, have been on the road, never staying long in one place as Andy struggles to escape the demons that have tortured him since his return from Iraq. Now they are back in the town where he grew up so Hayley can attend high school and attempt to have a normal life, put aside her own painful memories, and even have a relationship with Finn, the guy who obviously likes her but is hiding secrets of his own. Through Hayley's first person narration, Anderson explores the complicated nature of perception and memory, and how individuals manage to carry on after experiencing the worst.</p>

	<p><b>Title and Author:</b> <i>Search and Destroy</i> Dean Hughes</p> <p><b>Topics:</b> historical fiction; war; graphic violence; coming of age</p>	<p>Rick Ward, a recent high-school graduate, is uncertain about everything in his life except his desire to escape his unhappy home life and his bullying father. He enlists in the army and requests a combat assignment in Vietnam. After training, he volunteers for a special combat unit that goes on deep reconnaissance missions to hunt and kill the enemy. Hughes is especially effective in conveying the brutality and horrors of combat, and Rick's conflict between his sense of duty to his country and the compassion and responsibility he feels for the ruined lives of so many Vietnamese. After being wounded during an act of heroism, Rick has a homecoming similar to that of many other Vietnam veterans. He comes back feeling the war was a senseless waste, and tortured by recurring nightmares, he finds it difficult to adjust normal life. This is a compelling, insightful story about the emotional, physical, and psychological scars that wars leave upon soldiers.</p>
	<p><b>Title and Author:</b> <i>The Testing</i> Joelle Charbonneau</p> <p><b>Topics:</b> dystopian; survival; coming of age; relationships; adventure</p>	<p>In this first book of the trilogy, sixteen-year-old Malencia Vale, and the entire Five Lakes Colony (the former Great Lakes) is celebrating graduation. All Cia desires is to be chosen for The Testing, a United Commonwealth program that selects the best and brightest new graduates to become possible leaders of the slowly revitalizing post-war civilization. When Cia is chosen, her father finally tells her about his own nightmarish half-memories of The Testing. Armed with his dire warnings (“Cia, trust no one”), she bravely heads off to face the challenges of dangerous training and sheer terror to determine if she can survive and be one of the chosen few to salvage her society.</p>
	<p><b>Title and Author:</b> <i>Trouble</i> Gary Schmidt</p> <p><b>Topics:</b> realistic fiction; grief; prejudice; coming of age</p>	<p>Climbing Katahdin, the highest mountain in Maine, is the goal that Henry sets for himself when his brother dies in a car accident. Along with his dog, his best friend, and-surprisingly-the Cambodian boy whose car was involved in the fatal accident, Henry experiences a journey that is both physically daunting and spiritually exhilarating. The writing combines breathtaking nature imagery and hilarious comedy, as each boy better understands his family, community, and what really happened the night of the accident.</p>