

FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED

SUMMER READING 2019



This year, we would like every student to review the list for their upcoming grade level (7-8 or High School), and choose three books to read over the summer. Two of the texts should be fiction, and one non-fiction.

Grade 7-8

ELA

The Outsiders by S. E. Hinton. *The Outsiders* is a coming-of-age novel by S. E. Hinton, first published in 1967 by Viking Press. Hinton was 15 when she started writing the novel but did most of the work when she was 16 and a junior in high school.

The Giver by Lois Lowry. *The Giver* is a 1993 American young adult dystopian novel by Lois Lowry. It is set in a society which at first appears to be utopian but is revealed to be dystopian as the story progresses. The novel follows a 12-year-old boy named Jonas.

The Book Thief by Markus Zusak. *The Book Thief* is a historical novel by Australian author Markus Zusak and is his most popular work. Published in 2005, *The Book Thief* became an international bestseller and was translated into several languages. It was adapted into a 2013 feature film of the same name.

The Secret Life of Bees by Sue Monk Kidd. Set in 1964, it is a coming-of-age story about loss and betrayal. It received critical acclaim and was a New York Times bestseller. It won the 2004 Book Sense Book of the Year Awards, and was nominated for the Orange Broadband Prize for Fiction.

Refugee by Allan Gratz. *Refugee* is a young adult literature novel by Alan Gratz published in 2017. The book revolves around three main characters from three different eras; Nazi Germany, 1990s Cuba, and modern Syria. It received positive reviews that praised style and historical accuracy.

The Chocolate War by Robert Cormier. After suffering rejection from seven major publishers, *The Chocolate War* made its debut in 1974, and quickly became a bestselling—and provocative—classic for young adults. This chilling portrait of an all-boys prep school casts an unflinching eye on the pitfalls of conformity and corruption in our most elite cultural institutions.

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry by Mildred D. Taylor. *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* is a 1976 novel by Mildred D. Taylor, sequel to her 1975 novella *Song of the Trees*. It is a book about racism in America during the Great Depression and Jim Crow era. The novel won the 1977 Newbery Medal.

Wonder by R.J. Palacio. August (Auggie) Pullman was born with a severe facial difference that, up until now, has prevented him from going to a mainstream school. Starting 5th grade at Beecher Prep, Auggie wants nothing more than to be treated as an ordinary kid—but his new classmates can't get past his extraordinary face.

The Secret Garden by Frances Hodgson Burnett. Opening the door into the innermost places of the heart, *The Secret Garden* is a timeless classic that has left generations of readers with warm, lifelong memories of its magical charms. “*When Mary Lennox was sent to Misselthwaite Manor to live with her uncle, everybody said she was the most disagreeable-looking child ever seen...*”

Home and Career Skills

The Graveyard Book by Neil Gaiman. After the grisly murder of his entire family, a toddler wanders into a graveyard where the ghosts and other supernatural residents agree to raise him as one of their own.

Rules by Cynthia Lord. Twelve-year-old Catherine just wants a normal life. Which is near impossible when you have a brother with autism and a family that revolves around his disability. She's spent years trying to teach David the rules—from "a peach is not a funny-looking apple" to "keep your pants on in public"—in order to stop his embarrassing behaviors. But the summer Catherine meets Jason, a paraplegic boy, and Kristi, the next-door friend she's always wished for, it's her own shocking behavior that turns everything upside down and forces her to ask: What is normal?

Wonder by R.J. Palacio. August (Auggie) Pullman was born with a severe facial difference that, up until now, has prevented him from going to a mainstream school. Starting 5th grade at Beecher Prep, Auggie wants nothing more than to be treated as an ordinary kid—but his new classmates can't get past his extraordinary face.

Foreign Languages

One Shadow on the Wall by Leah Henderson. An orphaned boy in contemporary Senegal must decide between doing what is right and what is easy as he struggles to keep a promise that he made to his dying father.

Math

The Housekeeper and the Professor by Yoko Agawa. He is a brilliant math Professor with a peculiar problem—ever since a traumatic head injury, he has lived with only eighty minutes of short-term memory. She is an astute young Housekeeper, with a ten-year-old son, who is hired to care for him. And every morning, as the Professor and the Housekeeper are introduced to each other anew, a strange and beautiful relationship blossoms between them. Though he cannot hold memories for long (his brain is like a tape that begins to erase itself every eighty minutes), the Professor's mind is still alive with elegant equations from the past.

Music

After Tupac and D Foster by Jacqueline Woodson. The day D Foster enters Neeka and her best friend's lives, the world opens up for them. Suddenly they're keenly aware of things beyond their block in Queens, things that are happening in the world—like the shooting of Tupac Shakur—and in search of their Big Purpose in life. When—all too soon—D's mom swoops in to reclaim her, and Tupac dies, they are left with a sense of how quickly things can change and how even all-too-brief connections can touch deeply.

Beige by Cecil Castellucci. Exiled from Canada to Los Angeles, Katy can't believe she is spending the summer with her father—punk name: the Rat—a recovered addict and drummer for the band Suck. Even though Katy feels abandoned by her mom, even though the Rat's place is a mess and he's not like anything she'd call a father, Kathy won't make a fuss. After all, she is a girl who is quiet and polite, a girl who smiles, a girl who is, well, beige. Or is she? From the author of *BOY PROOF* and *THE QUEEN OF COOL* comes an edgy L.A. novel full of humor, heart, and music.

The Midnights by Sarah Nicole Smetana. Susannah Hayes has never been in the spotlight, but she dreams of following her father, a former rock star, onto the stage. As senior year begins, she's more interested in composing impressive chord progressions than college essays, certain that if she writes the perfect song, her father might finally look up from the past long enough to see her. But when he dies unexpectedly, her dreams—and her reality—shatter. While Susannah struggles with grief, her mother uproots them to a new city. There, Susannah realizes she can reinvent herself however she wants: a confident singer-songwriter, member of a hip band, embraced by an effortlessly cool best friend. But Susannah is not the only one keeping secrets, and soon, harsh revelations threaten to unravel her life once again. Set against the scintillating landscape of Southern California, *The Midnights* is an evocative coming-of-age debut about loss, creativity, and finding your voice while you're still finding yourself.

Symphony for the City of the Dead by M.T. Anderson. In September 1941, Adolf Hitler's Wehrmacht surrounded Leningrad in what was to become one of the longest and most destructive sieges in Western history—almost three years of bombardment and starvation that culminated in the harsh winter of 1943–1944. More than a million citizens perished. Survivors recall corpses littering the frozen streets, their relatives having neither the means nor the strength to bury them. Residents burned books, furniture, and floorboards to keep warm; they ate family pets and—eventually—one another to stay alive. Trapped between the Nazi invading force and the Soviet government itself was composer Dmitri Shostakovich, who would write a symphony that roused, rallied, eulogized, and commemorated his fellow citizens—the Leningrad Symphony, which came to occupy a surprising place of prominence in the eventual Allied victory. This is the true story of a city under siege: the triumph of bravery and defiance in the face of terrifying odds. It is also a look at the power—and layered meaning—of music in beleaguered lives. *Symphony for the City of the Dead* is a masterwork thrillingly told and impeccably researched by National Book Award-winning author M.T. Anderson.

Science

Seeds of Hope: Wisdom and Wonder from the World of Plants by Jane Goodall. From New York Times bestselling author and world-renowned scientist Jane Goodall, as seen in the National Geographic documentary *Jane*, comes a fascinating examination of the critical role that trees and plants play in our world

Reason for Hope: A Spiritual Journey by Jane Goodall. Dr. Jane Goodall is world-renowned for her work with chimpanzees and is a highly respected scientist and environmentalist. This is a spiritual autobiography that explores her beliefs about spirituality and moral evolution.

The Thing About Jellyfish by Ali Benjamin. Everyone says that it was an accident... that sometimes things "just happen". But Suzy won't believe it. Ever. After her best friend dies in a drowning accident, Suzy is convinced that the true cause of the tragedy was a rare jellyfish sting. Retreating into a silent world of imagination, she crafts a plan to prove her theory—even if it means traveling the globe, alone. Suzy's achingly heartfelt journey explores life, death, the astonishing wonder of the universe...and the potential for love and hope right next door.

An Inconvenient Truth by Al Gore. With this book, Gore, who is one of our environmental heroes—and a leading expert—brings together leading-edge research from top scientists around the world; photographs, charts, and other illustrations; and personal anecdotes and observations to document the fast pace and wide scope of global warming.

Your Inner Fish by Neil Shubin. Why do we look the way we do? What does the human hand have in common with the wing of a fly? Are breasts, sweat glands, and scales connected in some way? To better understand the inner workings of our bodies and to trace the origins of many of today's most common diseases, we have to turn to unexpected sources: worms, flies, and even fish.

Radioactive: Marie & Pierre Curie: A Tale of Love and Fallout by Lauren Redniss. *Radioactive* is the visual journey into the life of Marie Curie, as told through the dazzling collage style of acclaimed author and artist Lauren Redniss.

Guinea Pig Scientists: Bold Self-Experimenters in Science and Medicine by Leslie Dendy and Mel Boring, illustrated by C. B. Mordan. "It was August 27, 1885. In a hospital in Lima, Peru, a student named Daniel Carrión was preparing to infect himself with a dreaded disease . . . He had a small, sharp lancet ready . . . Carrión's friends and teacher from the medical school thought it was a bad idea. They knew Carrión was eager to learn more about this mysterious disease. But were the risks worth it?"

Chew on This: Everything You Don't Want to Know About Fast Food by Charles Wilson and Eric Schlosser. Kids love fast food. And the fast food industry definitely loves kids. It couldn't survive without them. Did you know that the biggest toy company in the world is McDonald's? It's true. In fact, one out of every three toys given to a child in the United States each year is from a fast food restaurant.

Women in Science: 50 Fearless Pioneers Who Changed the World by Rachel Ignotofsky. A charmingly illustrated and educational book, *Women in Science* highlights the contributions of fifty notable women to the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) from the ancient to the modern world.

Case Closed?: Nine Mysteries Unlocked by Modern Science by Susan Hughes. *Case Closed?* examines these and six other mysteries from ancient and modern times. This book reveals how modern science sheds new light

on people, vessels and entire civilizations throughout history that simply vanished. In some cases, the mystery has been solved. In other cases, readers can examine the latest evidence and decide for themselves.

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind, Young Reader's Edition by William Kamkwamba. When a terrible drought struck William Kamkwamba's tiny village in Malawi, his family lost all of the season's crops, leaving them with nothing to eat and nothing to sell.

Max Einstein: The Genius Experiment by James Patterson. Albert Einstein + James Patterson = A Must Read! The world's #1 bestselling author has teamed up with the world's most famous genius to entertain, educate and inspire a generation of kids – with the first and only kids' book series officially approved by the Albert Einstein Archives.

My DNA Diary: Cystic Fibrosis (Genetics for Kids Book 1) by Lisa Mullan. Cystic Fibrosis is one of the most common, life-limiting conditions in the world. You can't catch it. You inherit it from your parents. Why is Cystic Fibrosis so devastating? How do your parents make you ill? What is DNA anyway and how does it work?

Social Studies

Biographies/Autobiographies

Alexander Hamilton: The Outsider by Jean Fritz. You've probably heard of Alexander Hamilton. If you're not sure why he's famous, this book is for you. It presents the life, achievements, and failings of one of the individuals who helped create our country. If you're a Hamilton fan because of the musical, this biography will fill in some of the details Lin Manuel Miranda had to leave out!

Turning 15 on the Road to Freedom: My Story of the Selma Voting Rights March by Lynda Blackmon Lowery. This is the inspiring story of the youngest person to complete the historic walk to Selma to Montgomery. This includes primary documents and her reflections on her civil rights action.

Historical Fiction

Heart of a Samurai by Margi Preus. Manjiro and his friends are washed out to sea during a fishing expedition in 1841. They land on an island far from their native Japan. They are rescued by an American whaling boat. The Japanese and Americans distrust each other but he forms a relationship with the childless Captain Whitfield. He decides to go to America for an adventure and realizes the views of America he had were not valid and Americans in turn learn about Japan. Based on a real event and character.

The Great Trouble: A Mystery of London, the Blue Death, and a Boy Called Eel by Deborah Hopkinson. This story of the 1854 cholera outbreak in London is told through the eyes of Eel, a 13-year-old orphan who works as an errand boy at the Lion Brewery, cares for Dr. Snow's animals and moonlights as a "mudlark," scavenging the Thames for scraps of coal until he is unjustly accused of stealing.

Fire in the Streets by Kekla Magoon. In the aftermath of Dr. King's assassination in 1968, Chicago fourteen-year-old Maxie longs to join the Black Panthers, whether or not her brother Raheem, ex-boyfriend Sam, or her friends like it, and is soon caught up in the violence of anti-war and civil rights demonstrations.

The 57 Bus by Dashka Slater. In 2013, a horrible crime caught the nation's attention. A transgender student was riding a public bus home from school when their skirt was set on fire by another teenager. Sasha was badly burned. Richard, who lit the fire, eventually went to jail, and Sasha's burns healed. But both of their lives were forever changed. Author Dashka Slater interviewed both teens, their friends, families, teachers, and others who knew them and provides background information that reveals much more than sensational news stories ever told us, leaving readers with a new understanding, as well as some unanswerable questions about fairness and justice.

Illegal by Eoin Colfer and Andrew Donkin. Touching realistic fiction in graphic format. This book tells the story of two boys desperate for a better life and their efforts to leave their African homeland and migrate to Europe. The journey is arduous and deadly. Pair with *Refugee* by Alan Gratz.

Technology Education

The Great Bridge: The Epic Story of the Building of the Brooklyn Bridge by David McCullough. The dramatic and enthralling story of the building of the Brooklyn Bridge, the world's longest suspension bridge at the time, a tale of greed, corruption, and obstruction but also of optimism, heroism, and determination, told by master historian David McCullough

High School

This year, we would like every student to review the list below of recommended texts for their upcoming courses, and choose three books to read over the summer. Two of the texts should be fiction, and one non-fiction. If students have AP required readings, those texts would also count towards the total of three books.

ELA

On The Road by Jack Kerouac. *On the Road* is a novel by American writer Jack Kerouac, based on the travels of Kerouac and his friends across the United States. It is considered a defining work of the postwar Beat and Counterculture generations

Be A Changemaker by Laurie Ann Thompson. Gone are the days when kids were supposed to be "seen and not heard." Today, youth everywhere are rising up, building new organizations, and creating the changes they want to see in their communities and around the world. *Be a Changemaker* gives readers the tools and confidence they need to affect real change.

Gone by Michael Grant. A little Stephen King, a little Lord of the Rings, and a pure page-turner. In this dystopia, everyone disappears, except the young. With no technology, the threat of hunger, and absolutely no adults, well, it's not pretty. The first in a series told from multiple points of view, it's near impossible to not be sucked in to this saga.

From the Notebooks of Melanin Sun by Jaqueline Woodson. Melanin Sun has a lot to say. But sometimes it's hard to speak his mind, so he fills up notebooks with his thoughts instead. He writes about his mom a lot. They're about as close as they can be, because they have no other family. So when she suddenly tells him she's gay, his world is turned upside down. And if that weren't hard enough for him to accept, her girlfriend is white. Melanin Sun is angry and scared. How can his mom do this to him? Is this the end of their closeness? What will his friends think? And can he let her girlfriend be part of their family?

Darius the Great Is Not Okay by Adib Khorram. Darius Kellner's life isn't so great. As a half-Persian teen with clinical depression and self-esteem issues, he struggles to fit in with his classmates and family. On his first ever trip to Iran to visit his grandparents, Darius still feels completely out-of-place. But everything changes when he meets Sohrab, his grandparents' neighbor, who helps him realize his self-worth. A stunning novel about family, friendship, and coming to terms with who you are.

Lord of the Flies by William Golding. At the dawn of the next world war, a plane crashes on an uncharted island, stranding a group of schoolboys. At first, with no adult supervision, their freedom is something to celebrate; this far from civilization the boys can do anything they want. Anything. They attempt to forge their own society, failing, however, in the face of terror, sin and evil.

A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens. After eighteen years as a political prisoner in the Bastille, the ageing Doctor Manette is finally released and reunited with his daughter in England. There the lives of two very different men, Charles Darnay, an exiled French aristocrat, and Sydney Carton, a disreputable but brilliant English lawyer, become enmeshed through their love for Lucie Manette. From the tranquil roads of London, they are drawn against their will to the vengeful, bloodstained streets of Paris at the height of the Reign of Terror, and they soon fall under the lethal shadow of La Guillotine.

The Girl in the Letter by Emily Gunnis. A heartbreaking letter. A girl locked away. A mystery to be solved.

The Art of Talking to Yourself by Vironika Tugaleva. This might look like a self-help book. It might even read like one. Once you dive into its pages, however, you will find some differences. Unlike others of its kind, this book does not promise results or give expert opinions. It is neither a miracle cure nor a magic potion. It does not pretend to have all the answers.

All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr. From the highly acclaimed, multiple award-winning Anthony Doerr, the stunningly beautiful instant New York Times bestseller about a blind French girl and a German boy whose paths collide in occupied France as both try to survive the devastation of World War II.

AP Literature

How to Read Literature Like a Professor, Revised Edition, by Thomas C. Foster. A thoroughly revised and updated edition of Thomas C. Foster's classic guide—a lively and entertaining introduction to literature and literary basics, including symbols, themes and contexts, that shows you how to make your everyday reading experience more rewarding and enjoyable.

The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood. In the world of the near future, who will control women's bodies? Offred is a Handmaid in the Republic of Gilead. Offred can remember the days before, when she lived with her husband Luke; when she played with and protected her daughter; when she had a job, money of her own, and access to knowledge. But all of that is gone now.... Funny, unexpected, horrifying, and altogether convincing, *The Handmaid's Tale* is at once scathing satire, dire warning, and tour de force.

Foreign Languages

The House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros. Acclaimed by critics, beloved by readers of all ages, taught everywhere from inner-city grade schools to universities across the country, and translated all over the world, *The House on Mango Street* is the remarkable story of Esperanza Cordero. Told in a series of vignettes – sometimes heartbreaking, sometimes deeply joyous – it is the story of a young Latina girl growing up in Chicago, inventing for herself who and what she will become. Few other books in our time have touched so many readers.

Cool Salsa: Bilingual Poems on Growing Up Latino in the United States (Spanish Edition) by Lori Marie Carlson (Editor). Growing up Latino in America means speaking two languages, living two lives, learning the rules of two cultures. *Cool Salsa* celebrates the tones, rhythms, sounds, and experiences of that double life. Here are poems about families and parties, insults and sad memories, hot dogs and mangos, the sweet syllables of Spanish and the snag-toothed traps of English. Here is the glory—and pain—of being Latino American.

Yes! We Are Latinos: Poems and Prose About the Latino Experience by Alma Flor Ada (Author), F. Isabel Campoy (Author), David Diaz (Illustrator). Alma Flor Ada and F. Isabel Campoy's informational yet heartwarming text provides a resource for young Latino readers to see themselves, while also encouraging non-Latino children to understand the breadth and depth of the contributions made by Latinos in the US. Caldecott Medalist David Diaz's hand-cut illustrations are bold and striking, perfectly complementing the vibrant stories

in the book. YES! WE ARE LATINOS stands alone in its presentation of the broad spectrum of Latino culture and will appeal to readers of fiction and nonfiction.

The Little Prince by Antoine de Sainte-Exupery. A brief but powerful book filled with moral lessons for people of all ages.

Music

After Tupac and D Foster by Jacqueline Woodson. The day D Foster enters Neeka and her best friend's lives, the world opens up for them. Suddenly they're keenly aware of things beyond their block in Queens, things that are happening in the world—like the shooting of Tupac Shakur—and in search of their Big Purpose in life. When—all too soon—D's mom swoops in to reclaim her, and Tupac dies, they are left with a sense of how quickly things can change and how even all-too-brief connections can touch deeply.

Beige by Cecil Castellucci. Exiled from Canada to Los Angeles, Katy can't believe she is spending the summer with her father—punk name: the Rat—a recovered addict and drummer for the band Suck. Even though Katy feels abandoned by her mom, even though the Rat's place is a mess and he's not like anything she'd call a father, Kathy won't make a fuss. After all, she is a girl who is quiet and polite, a girl who smiles, a girl who is, well, beige. Or is she? From the author of BOY PROOF and THE QUEEN OF COOL comes an edgy L.A. novel full of humor, heart, and music.

The Midnights by Sarah Nicole Smetana. Susannah Hayes has never been in the spotlight, but she dreams of following her father, a former rock star, onto the stage. As senior year begins, she's more interested in composing impressive chord progressions than college essays, certain that if she writes the perfect song, her father might finally look up from the past long enough to see her. But when he dies unexpectedly, her dreams—and her reality—shatter. While Susannah struggles with grief, her mother uproots them to a new city. There, Susannah realizes she can reinvent herself however she wants: a confident singer-songwriter, member of a hip band, embraced by an effortlessly cool best friend. But Susannah is not the only one keeping secrets, and soon, harsh revelations threaten to unravel her life once again. Set against the scintillating landscape of Southern California, *The Midnights* is an evocative coming-of-age debut about loss, creativity, and finding your voice while you're still finding yourself.

Symphony for the City of the Dead by M.T. Anderson. In September 1941, Adolf Hitler's Wehrmacht surrounded Leningrad in what was to become one of the longest and most destructive sieges in Western history—almost three years of bombardment and starvation that culminated in the harsh winter of 1943–1944. More than a million citizens perished. Survivors recall corpses littering the frozen streets, their relatives having neither the means nor the strength to bury them. Residents burned books, furniture, and floorboards to keep warm; they ate family pets and—eventually—one another to stay alive. Trapped between the Nazi invading force and the Soviet government itself was composer Dmitri Shostakovich, who would write a symphony that roused, rallied, eulogized, and commemorated his fellow citizens—the Leningrad Symphony, which came to occupy a surprising place of prominence in the eventual Allied victory. This is the true story of a city under siege: the triumph of bravery and defiance in the face of terrifying odds. It is also a look at the power—and layered meaning—of music in beleaguered lives. *Symphony for the City of the Dead* is a masterwork thrillingly told and impeccably researched by National Book Award–winning author M.T. Anderson.

Social Studies

I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban by Yousafzai, Malala and C. Lamb. Memoir by the courageous advocate of education. Readers will be inspired by this young leader's leadership and ability to meet challenges bravely.

The Night Diary by Veera Hiranandani. Newbery Honor Winner. A fascinating historical fiction book about the partition of India in 1947 which is a subject that is not well known about in the US. 12-year-old Nisha is an engaging character who flees with her Hindu family during a time of a great time political unrest. She struggles to comprehend the conflict between Muslim and Hindus which result in millions leaving homes behind to resettle in the now divided countries of India and Pakistan. This book is written in diary form as Nisha attempts to deal with her confusion and loss.

The Family Romanov: Murder, Rebellion, and the Fall of Imperial Russia by Candace Fleming. A fascinating account of the Romanov family who was Russia's last royal family. Photos and first person accounts make this a fast-paced non-fiction book that reads like a novel.

The Things They Carried by Tim O'Brien. *The Things They Carried* is a collection of linked short stories by American novelist Tim O'Brien, about a platoon of American soldiers fighting on the ground in the Vietnam War. His third book about the war, it is based upon his experiences as a soldier in the 23rd Infantry Division.

Global 9

An Edible History of Humanity by Tom Standage. Throughout history, food has acted as a catalyst of social change, political organization, geopolitical competition, industrial development, military conflict, and economic expansion. *An Edible History of Humanity* is a pithy, entertaining account of how a series of changes—caused, enabled, or influenced by food—has helped to shape and transform societies around the world.

Global 10 and AP World History

A History of the World in 6 Glasses by Tom Standage. For Tom Standage, each drink is a kind of technology, a catalyst for advancing culture by which he demonstrates the intricate interplay of different civilizations. You may never look at your favorite drink the same way again.

Science

Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers by Mary Roach. *Stiff* is an oddly compelling, often hilarious exploration of the strange lives of our bodies postmortem. For two thousand years, cadavers—some willingly, some unwittingly—have been involved in science's boldest strides and weirdest undertakings. In this fascinating account, Mary Roach visits the good deeds of cadavers over the centuries and tells the engrossing story of our bodies when we are no longer with them.

Brain Rules by John Medina. In *Brain Rules*, Dr. John Medina, a molecular biologist, shares his lifelong interest in how the brain sciences might influence the way we teach our children and the way we work. In each chapter, he describes a brain rule—what scientists know for sure about how our brains work—and then offers transformative ideas for our daily lives.

The Man Who Mistook his Wife for a Hat by Oliver Sacks. In his most extraordinary book, "one of the great clinical writers of the twentieth century" (The New York Times) recounts the case histories of patients lost in the bizarre, apparently inescapable world of neurological disorders.

The Great Brain Book: An Inside Look at the Inside of Your Head by HP Newquist. The anatomy, functions, surgery, care and feeding, historical discovery, and imminent improvements of this complex and powerful organ in an "oh-wow!" package. High interest with just a touch of yuck.

The How of Happiness by Sonja Lyubomirsky. *The How of Happiness* is a different kind of happiness book, one that offers a comprehensive guide to understanding what happiness is, and isn't, and what can be done to bring us all closer to the happy life we envision for ourselves.

Survival of the Sickest: The Surprising Connections Between Disease and Longevity by Sharon Moalem. Dr. Moalem turns our current understanding of illness on its head and challenges us to fundamentally change the way we think about our bodies, our health, and our relationship to just about every other living thing on earth, from plants and animals to insects and bacteria.

What If? Scientific Answers to Absurd Hypothetical Questions by Randall Munroe. Randall Munroe left NASA in 2005 to start up his hugely popular site XKCD 'a web comic of romance, sarcasm, math and language' which offers a witty take on the world of science and geeks. It now has 600,000 to a million page hits daily. Every now and then, Munroe would get emails asking him to arbitrate a science debate. 'My friend and I were arguing about what would happen if a bullet got struck by lightning, and we agreed that you should resolve it . . .' He liked these questions so much that he started up What If.

The Gene: An Intimate History by Siddhartha Mukherjee. From the Pulitzer Prize-winning, bestselling author of *The Emperor of All Maladies*—a magnificent history of the gene and a response to the defining question of the future: What becomes of being human when we learn to “read” and “write” our own genetic information?