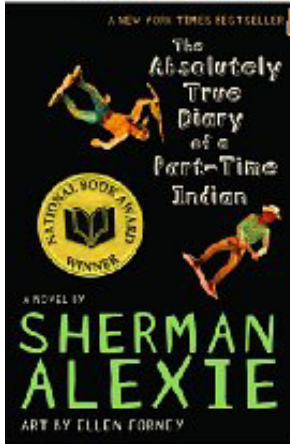


**Delbarton School**  
**Recommended Summer Reading (2009)**

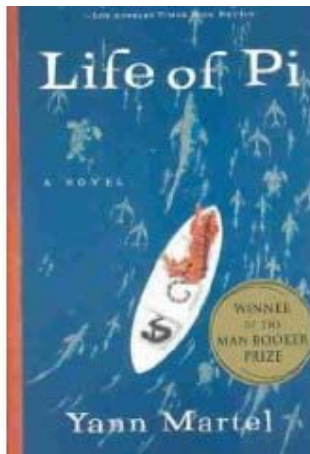
**9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> grades**

**Fiction**



***An Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie**

Arnold Spirit weathers the typical teenage indignations and triumphs like a champ but soon faces far more trying ordeals as his home life begins to crumble and decay amidst the suffocating mire of alcoholism on the reservation. Alexie's humor and prose are easygoing and well suited to his young audience, and he doesn't pull many punches as he levels his eye at stereotypes both warranted and inapt. A few of the plotlines fade to gray by the end, but this ultimately affirms the incredible power of best friends to hurt and heal in equal measure. Younger teens looking for the strength to lift themselves out of rough situations would do well to start here.



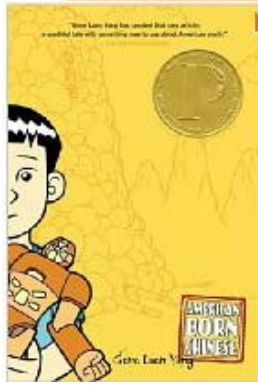
***Life of Pi* by Yann Martel**

A realistic, rousing adventure and meta-tale of survival, *Life of Pi* explores the redemptive power of storytelling and the transformative nature of fiction. It's a story, as one character claims, to "make you believe in God."



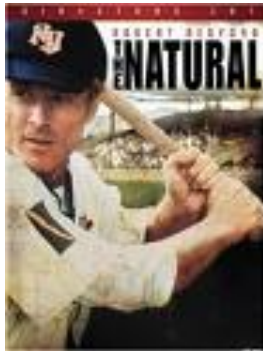
***The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini**

Khaled Hosseini's stunning debut novel *The Kite Runner* follows a young boy, Amir, as he faces the challenges that confront him on the path to manhood—testing friendships, finding love, cheating death, accepting faults, and gaining understanding. Living in Afghanistan in the 1960s, Amir enjoys a life of privilege that is shaped by his brotherly friendship with Hassan, his servant's son. Their friendship is a complex tapestry of love, loss, privilege, and shame.



### ***American Born Chinese* by Gene Yang**

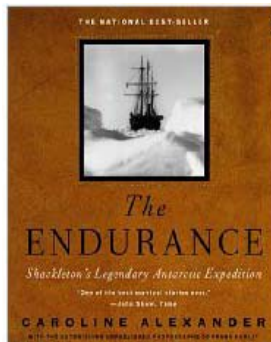
A tour-de-force by rising indy comics star Gene Yang, *American Born Chinese* tells the story of three apparently unrelated characters: Jin Wang, who moves to a new neighborhood with his family only to discover that he's the only Chinese-American student at his new school; the powerful Monkey King, subject of one of the oldest and greatest Chinese fables; and Chin-kee, a personification of the ultimate negative Chinese stereotype, who is ruining his cousin Danny's life with his yearly visits. Their lives and stories come together with an unexpected twist in this action-packed modern fable. *American Born Chinese* is an amazing ride, all the way up to the astonishing climax.



### ***The Natural* by Bernard Malamud**

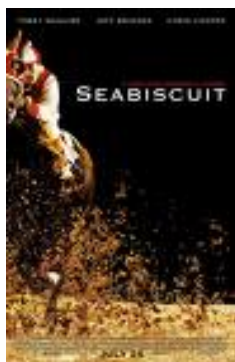
In his story, Malamud explains the highs and lows of any sports athlete - being in the zone and hitting slumps. The major differences between Robert Redford performing like Roy Hobbs, and the true Roy Hobbs in Malamud's book, is that Hobbs is not superhuman - or a "Wonderboy" as his bat exclaims.

## **Non-Fiction**



### ***The Endurance: Shackleton's Legendary Antarctic Expedition* by Caroline Alexander**

Melding superb research and the extraordinary expedition photography of Frank Hurley, *The Endurance* by Caroline Alexander is a stunning work of history, adventure, and art which chronicles "one of the greatest epics of survival in the annals of exploration." The Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition, led by renowned polar explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton, hoped to become the first to cross the Antarctic continent.



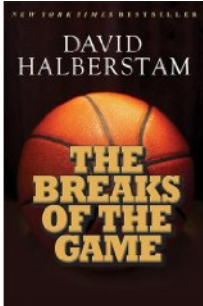
### ***Seabiscuit* by Laura Hillenbrand**

He didn't *look* like much. With his smallish stature, knobby knees, and slightly crooked forelegs, he looked more like a cow pony than a thoroughbred. But looks aren't everything; his quality, an admirer once wrote, "was mostly in his heart." Laura Hillenbrand tells the story of the horse who became a cultural icon in *Seabiscuit: An American Legend*.



### ***Levels of the Game* by John McPhee**

"McPhee has produced what is probably the best tennis book ever written. On the surface it is a joint profile of . . . Arthur Ashe and Clark Graebner, but underneath it is considerably more—namely, a highly original way of looking at human behavior . . . He proves his point with consummate skill and journalistic artistry. You are the way you play, he is saying. The court is life."—Donald Jackson, *Life*



### ***Breaks of the Game* by David Halberstam**

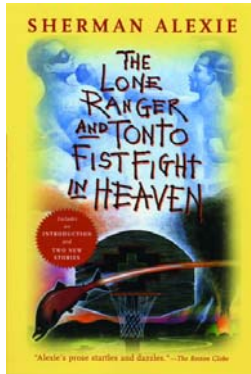
Available for the first time in years, David Halberstam's *The Breaks of the Game* focuses on one grim season (1979-80) in the life of the Portland Trail Blazers, a team that only three years before had been National Basketball Association champions.

As Halberstam follows this collection of men through the months, through the losing streaks and occasional victories, the endless trips and the brutal schedules, we come to know them and their world--the other players, coaches, and owners; the competition, drafts, trades, and traditions; the wives, the fans, the media connections--a world of grand dreams, impossible expectations, and bracing realities.

**Delbarton School**  
**Recommended Summer Reading (2009)**

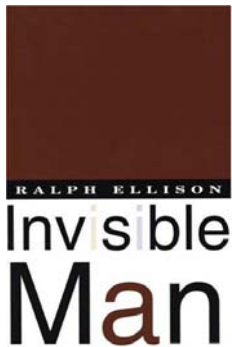
**11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> grades**

**Fiction**



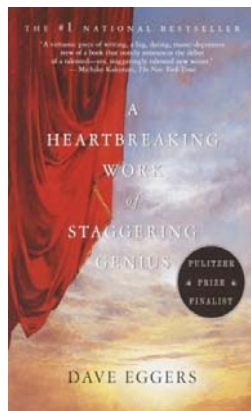
***Tonto and the Lone Ranger Fist-Fight in Heaven* by Sherman Alexie**

This work chronicles modern life on the Spokane Indian Reservation. Victor, through whose eyes we view the community, is strongly aware of Native American traditions but wonders whether his ancestors view today's Indians--mired in alcohol, violence, and an almost palpable sense of despair--with sympathy or disgust. In spite of the bleakness of reservation life, the text brims with humor and passion as it juxtaposes ancient customs with such contemporary artifacts as electric guitars and diet Pepsi.



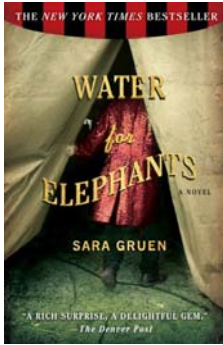
***Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison**

*Invisible Man* makes my short list of the greatest stories ever written. Ellison creates a vivid and shocking picture of America and society's subversion of individual identity in search of something larger. He said soon after the book was published that "Invisible Man" was not just about the black experience in America, it was an account of every person's "invisibility" in a world that tells us how to think of each other.



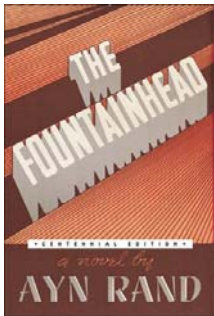
***A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius* by Dave Eggers**

Despite the layers of ironic hesitation, the reader soon discerns that the emotions informing the book are raw and, more importantly, authentic. After presenting a self-effacing set of "Rules and Suggestions for the Enjoyment of this Book" and an extended, hilarious set of acknowledgments, Eggers describes his parents' horrific deaths from cancer within a few weeks of each other during his senior year of college, and his decision to move with his eight year-old brother, Toph, from the suburbs of Chicago to Berkeley, near where his sister, Beth, lives. In California, he manages to care for Toph, work at various jobs, found Might, and even take a star turn on MTV's *The Real World*.



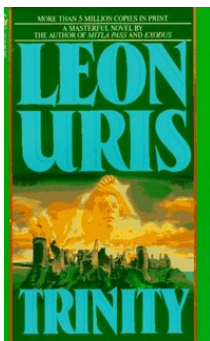
### ***Water for Elephants* by Sara Gruen**

A quirky but substantive summer read. Surprising, poignant, and funny, *Water for Elephants* is that rare novel with a story so engrossing, one is reluctant to put it down; with characters so engaging, they continue to live long after the last page has been turned; with a world built of wonder, a world so real, one starts to breathe its air.



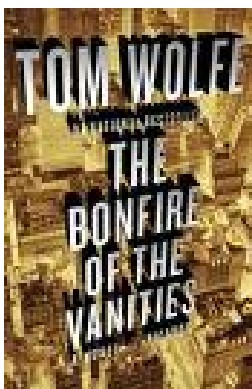
### ***The Fountainhead* by Ayn Rand**

This is a classic for any young man looking to assert his own voice in the world. A philosophical novel of self-empowerment, Rand's fiction has spawned philosophy whose adherents remain faithful to this day. It was Rand's first major literary success and its royalties and movie rights brought her fame and financial security. The book's title is a reference to Rand's statement that "man's ego is the fountainhead of human progress".



### ***Trinity* by Leon Uris**

The "terrible beauty" that is Ireland comes alive in this mighty epic that re-creates that Emerald's Isle's fierce struggle for independence. *Trinity* is a saga of glories and defeats, triumphs and tragedies, lived by a young Catholic rebel and the beautiful and valiant Protestant girl who defied her heritage to join him. Leon Uris has painted a masterful portrait of a beleaguered people divided by religion and wealth--impoverished Catholic peasants pitted against a Protestant aristocracy wielding power over life and death.



### ***The Bonfire of the Vanities* by Tom Wolfe**

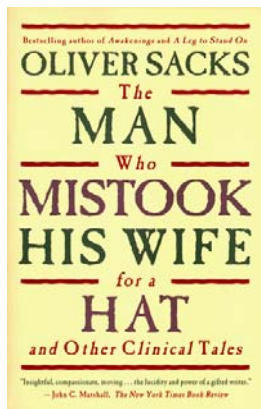
He wasn't aging; he was growing up. *Bonfire's* pyrotechnic satire of 1980s New York wasn't just Wolfe's best book, it was the best bestselling fiction debut of the decade, a miraculously realistic study of an unbelievably status-mad society, from the fiery combatants of the South Bronx to the bubbling scum at the top of Wall Street. Sherman McCoy, a farcically arrogant investment banker (dubbed a "Master of the Universe," Wolfe's brilliant metaphorical co-opting of a then-important toy for boys), hits a black guy in the Bronx with his Mercedes and runs--right into a nightmare peopled by vicious mistresses, thin wives like "social x-rays," slime-bag politicians, tabloid hacks, and Dantesque denizens of the "justice" system. If the Coen and Marx brothers together dramatized *The Great Gatsby*, Wolfe's *Bonfire* would probably be funnier. Many think his second novel, *A Man in Full*, is deeper, but *Bonfire* will never die down.

## Non-Fiction



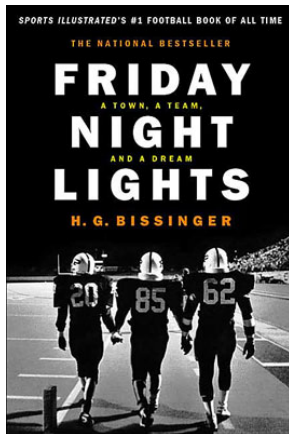
### *Angela's Ashes* by Frank McCourt

"When I look back on my childhood I wonder how I managed to survive at all. It was, of course, a miserable childhood: the happy childhood is hardly worth your while. Worse than the ordinary miserable childhood is the miserable Irish childhood, and worse yet is the miserable Irish Catholic childhood." So begins the luminous memoir of Frank McCourt, born in Depression-era Brooklyn to recent Irish immigrants and raised in the slums of Limerick, Ireland. Yet Malachy - exasperating, irresponsible and beguiling - does nurture in Frank an appetite for the one thing he can provide: a story. Frank lives for his father's tales of Cuchulain, who saved Ireland, and of the Angel on the Seventh Step, who brings his mother babies.



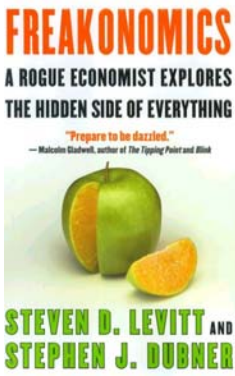
### *The Man who Mistook his Wife for a Hat* by Oliver Sacks

For the more science minded reader. Neurologist Sacks presents a series of clinical tales drawn from fascinating and unusual cases encountered during his years of medical practice. Sacks introduces the reader to real people who suffer from a variety of neurological syndromes which include symptoms such as amnesia, uncontrolled movements, and musical hallucinations. Sacks recounts their stories in a riveting, compassionate, and thoughtful manner.



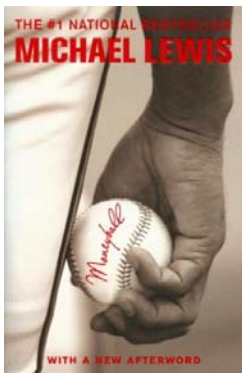
### *Friday Night Lights* by H.G. Bissinger

The book that inspired the movie and TV series of the same name. An eye-opening portrait into the community of Odessa Texas. In one breath an entertaining sports read and a hard piece of investigative journalism.



### ***Freakonomics* by Steven B. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner**

Which is more dangerous, a gun or a swimming pool? What do schoolteachers and sumo wrestlers have in common? Why do drug dealers still live with their moms? How much do parents really matter? What kind of impact did Roe v. Wade have on violent crime? These may not sound like typical questions for an economist to ask--but Levitt is not a typical economist. He studies the stuff and riddles of everyday life--from cheating and crime to sports and child rearing--and his conclusions regularly turn the conventional wisdom on its head. The authors show that economics is, at root, the study of incentives--how people get what they want, or need, especially when other people want or need the same thing. In this book, they set out to explore the hidden side of everything. If morality represents how we would like the world to work, then economics represents how it actually does work.



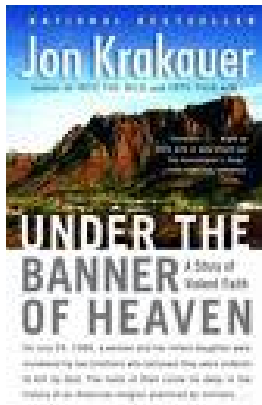
### ***Moneyball* by Michael Lewis**

The book that changed a game. Lewis demonstrates that the traditional yardsticks of success for players and teams are fatally flawed. Even the box score misleads us by ignoring the crucial importance of the humble base on balls. This information has been around for years, and nobody inside Major League Baseball paid it any mind. And then came Billy Beane, G.M. of the Oakland Athletics.



### ***Nickel and Dimed: On (not) getting by in America* by Barbara Ehrenreich**

Acclaimed as an instant classic upon publication, *Nickel and Dimed* has sold more than 1.5 million copies and become a staple of classroom reading. Chosen for “one book” initiatives across the country, it has fueled nationwide campaigns for a living wage. Funny, poignant, and passionate, this revelatory firsthand account of life in low-wage America—the story of Barbara Ehrenreich’s attempts to eke out a living while working as a waitress, hotel maid, house cleaner, nursing-home aide, and Wal-Mart associate—has become an essential part of the nation’s political discourse.



## ***Under the Banner of Heaven* by Jon Krakauer**

In 1984, Ron and Dan Lafferty murdered the wife and infant daughter of their younger brother Allen. The crimes were noteworthy not merely for their brutality but for the brothers' claim that they were acting on direct orders from God. In *Under the Banner of Heaven*, Jon Krakauer tells the story of the killers and their crime but also explores the shadowy world of Mormon fundamentalism from which the two emerged.