

# *Upper School Summer Reading 2020*

Dear Parents and Guardians,

The upper school's summer reading "book club" format has been successful for many years; however, we are making a slight change this time around! These five summer books were selected by Hill Top teachers; each teacher will lead a book discussion in the fall. The books cover a variety of topics, so we trust that every Hill Top student can find something of interest.

Upper school students will each choose **one** of the books listed in this packet. To ensure that your child will be able to fully participate in a book discussion, he or she will also choose **one** of four assignment options to be submitted on September 15, 2020. The four options--instructions included--are also located in this packet.

**Short version: choose a book and an assignment, then read, respond, and create! Due 9/15/20 to your English teacher.**

We are very excited about our summer reading program, and we are looking forward to excellent discussions in the fall. If you have any questions, email me at [gsedgwick@hilltopprep.org](mailto:gsedgwick@hilltopprep.org).

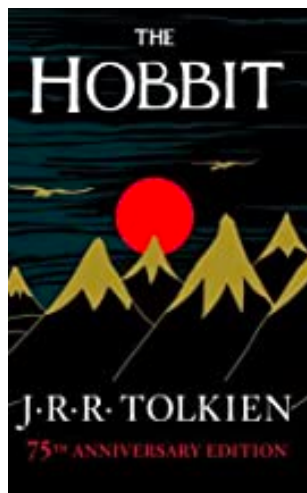
Sincerely,

George Sedgwick  
Head of Upper School

## Book Choices -- pick one!

### *The Hobbit* • By J.R.R. Tolkien

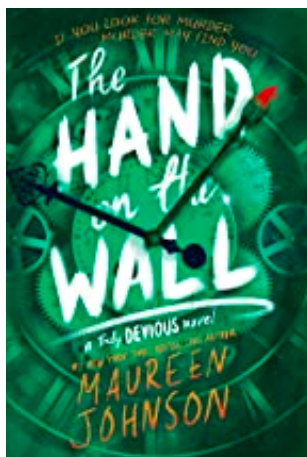
-Discussion to be led by Mr. Sedgwick



If you have never taken the time to explore this fantasy classic, now is your chance! "In a hole in the ground, there lived a hobbit." So begins one of the most beloved and delightful tales in the English language. Set in the imaginary world of Middle-earth, at once a classic myth and a modern fairy tale, *The Hobbit* is one of literature's most enduring and well-loved novels. Dragons, goblins, and giant spiders--oh my!

### *The Hand on the Wall* • By Maureen Johnson

-Discussion to be led by Mrs. Jones



*The Hand on the Wall* is the 3rd novel in the *Truly Devious* series. You might be especially interested in this if you read the first novel when Katie Bradley presented it 2 years ago. The students at Ellingham Academy are all unique in their abilities and their school experience is slightly reminiscent of ours at Hill Top.

Blurb from the author's website: "Three people are now dead. One, a victim of either a prank gone wrong or a murder. Another, dead by misadventure. And now, an accident in Burlington has claimed another life. All three in the wrong place at the wrong time. All at the exact moment of Stevie's greatest triumph . . ."

## *The Nickle Boys* • By Colson Whitehead

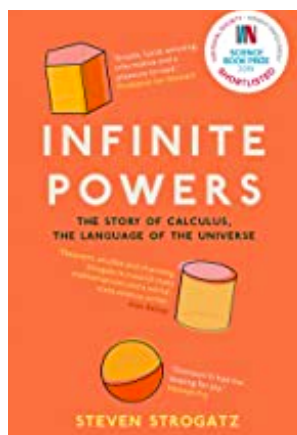
-Discussion to be led by Mrs. Selinsky

*The Nickle Boys* is short contemporary fiction based on the real story of a boys' reformatory school. Nickel Academy's leaders respect nothing but *profit* and *public image*. They will do anything to protect profit and image, even destroy the kids they purport to save. And you will never get over the ending. Never.



## *Infinite Powers* • By Steven Strogatz

-Discussion to be led by Jim Riley

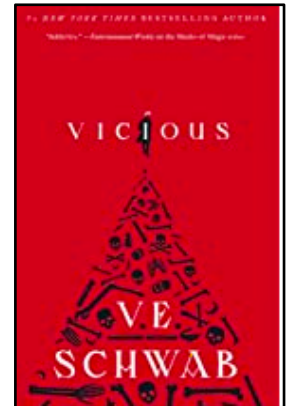


Steven Strogatz's brilliantly creative, down-to-earth history shows that calculus is not about complexity; it's about simplicity. It harnesses an unreal number—infinity—to tackle real-world problems, breaking them down into easier ones and then reassembling the answers into solutions that feel miraculous.

## *Vicious* • By V.E. Schwab

-Discussion to be led by Mrs. Gillespie

Victor and Eli are college roommates who have a theory regarding adrenaline, near-death experiences, and superpowers. When one of them tries to take their research beyond theory, well...these things never go well. Ten years later, Victor breaks out of prison determined to hunt down Eli who is trying to hunt down and kill everyone who has superpowers.



## Assignments -- pick one!

1. Current Event Tie-in
2. Novel Inventions
3. Soundtrack
4. Storyboard

No matter what book you pick or what assignment you choose, the due dates are the same. Turn in your assignment on **Sept. 15, 2020 to your English teacher**. The book talks with your group will be on the same day, during Mentor period.



### Assignment Option 1: Current Event Tie-in

Consider a current event that is connected to your book.

After finishing your summer reading book, do a little online research ([Google News](#) is a good starting place) and find an article about a current event that relates to a theme or topic in your book.\*

(\*Examples: *The Hobbit* - travel, *Infinite Powers* - scientific advances)

The article should be from a [reputable news source](#) and should have been published in **2020**. Read the article, then answer the questions below.

1. Title of article:
2. Author(s):
3. Name of publication:
4. Publication date:
5. Link/URL to article:
6. What is the article about? **Summarize** in 2-3 sentences.

7. Identify a **theme or topic** in the article, and describe how this theme/topic relates to your summer reading book. **Write a full paragraph.**
8. Imagine you are one of the characters in your book. Share an **opinion** about the article from the perspective of this character. What would this character have to say about the article you chose? **Again, write a full paragraph.**
9. Imagine you are writing a sequel to your book. Identify at least one **fact** from the article to incorporate into your hypothetical sequel. How could this fact help drive the story line? **Answer in a paragraph, of course!**

## Assignment Option 2: Novel Inventions

**Invent something to help a character.**

Almost every character in a book (whether real or fictional) encounters a problem through the course of their narrative. Sometimes it's a small, everyday problem; other times it's a big problem.

Choose a problem that a character in your book faces, whether big or small. **In a well-developed paragraph, describe the problem.** Be specific. Choose examples that plainly illustrate the problem and explain the effect on the character.

Now, think outside the box. Come up with an invention that could help your character deal with/solve/overcome this problem. You have a few options:

1. **Write another paragraph describing the invention.** What does it look like? How big is it? What is it made of? Maybe it's an app? What does the user interface look like?
2. **Create a drawing (by hand or digital) of the invention.** If it's an app, draw the user interface and show a few screenshots.
3. **Create a small scale model of your invention.**

**Write one more paragraph describing how this invention (or app) helps solve your character's problem and makes their life easier/better.** Be specific. Refer back to the examples you used in your first paragraph.

## Assignment Option 3: Soundtrack

**Find songs to match five scenes in the book.**

Students will consider key moments in a character's journey over the course of the novel and come up with a soundtrack to accompany these episodes. Here are the necessary components:

1. Select **five different moments** in a character's journey that are important to understanding the character and the overall story. These need to be significant and specific scenes in the novel. For example, don't pick when a moment when someone is simply walking the streets of a city; instead, choose when a character is walking at a certain time, for an important reason, to a particular destination.
2. Reflect on the mood, setting, and tone of the selected scenes and choose songs that match--analyze what the character is thinking, feeling, and/or experiencing and what is happening in the story overall, and then try to match a song to that moment in the character's life
3. **Students will write a single paragraph for each scene and song choice.** Explain the scene, the song selection, and why the scene and song fit together. Perhaps begin each paragraph with "When character x is \_\_\_\_\_, the song \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ should be on the soundtrack," and then explain.
4. Be creative, but use good judgment in the selection of songs: no profanity or inappropriate subject matter in lyrics

## Assignment Option 4: Storyboard

**Create storyboards for your chosen book.**

Storyboards are simple comics that are used in the performing arts to plan the movement in plays, the shots in films, etc. They are also a great way to summarize your reading.

**At four points during your summer reading book**, pause to fill in a storyboard. Rules for each storyboard appear below. Draw carefully. Don't forget to include written captions. Add speech and thought bubbles.

A printable pdf of a storyboard is attached for you to fill in, but you may download a different storyboard blank or create your own.

**Storyboard 1** Using a copy of the storyboard template, storyboard a scene from the book that introduces the main characters and setting. Remember to add a caption and thought or speech bubbles to help show who your characters really are.

**Storyboard 2** Again using the storyboard template, storyboard a scene that explains the major conflict of your book. Your chosen scene should show exactly why the conflict is so intense.

**Storyboard 3** Using the storyboard template, storyboard a scene that illustrates the climax of your book. Don't remember what the climax of a book is? Check:

<https://literarydevices.net/climax/>

**Storyboard 4** Again using the template, storyboard the resolution of the novel, showing whether or not it is a "happy ending." Your caption and thought or speech bubbles should reveal how the characters have developed and how the conflict was resolved. Spoilers are required!