Welcome (or welcome back) to the 9/10 team!

DIRECTIONS: Select and read one of the following books. Finish your reading before the beginning of the school year. Early in the semester, students will complete a follow-up project or test based on the summer reading books. **This project will be graded.** An extra-credit assignment will be available for reading a second book from the list.

YOU MUST CHOOSE A BOOK THAT YOU HAVE NEVER READ BEFORE IN ORDER TO GET CREDIT FOR THE ASSIGNMENT.

To choose your book, browse in a library or bookstore, read the back cover and the first two paragraphs of the first chapter, or select a “sample” from the free kindle app. Choose something that grips your attention!

*denotes more accessible books,
**Denotes books that most 9th and 10th find works for their reading level,
***Denotes a more challenging book for stronger readers

***The Help by Kathryn Stockett
Aibileen is a black maid in 1962 Jackson, Mississippi, who's always taken orders quietly, but lately she's unable to hold her bitterness back. Her friend Minny has never held her tongue but now must somehow keep secrets about her employer that leave her speechless. White socialite Skeeter just graduated college. She's full of ambition, but without a husband, she's considered a failure. Together, these seemingly different women join together to write a tell-all book about work as a black maid in the South that could forever alter their destinies and the life of a small town... (Amazon summary)

***All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr
Doerr’s magnificently drawn story seems at once spacious and tightly composed. It rests, historically, during the occupation of France during WWII, but brief chapters told in alternating voices give the overall—and long—narrative a swift movement through time and events. We have two main characters, each one on opposite sides in the conflagration that is destroying Europe. Marie-Louise is a sightless girl who lived with her father in Paris before the occupation; he was a master locksmith for the Museum of Natural History. When German forces necessitate abandonment of the city, Marie-Louise’s father, taking with him the museum’s greatest treasure, removes himself and his daughter and eventually arrives at his uncle’s house in the coastal city of Saint-Malo. Young German soldier Werner is sent to Saint-Malo to track Resistance activity there, and eventually, and inevitably, Marie-Louise’s and Werner’s paths cross. It is through their individual and intertwined tales that Doerr masterfully and knowledgeably re-creates the deprived civilian conditions of war-torn France and the strictly controlled lives of the military occupiers--Brad Hooper, Booklist.
**The Hate You Give** by Angie Thomas
Sixteen-year-old Starr Carter moves between two worlds: the poor neighborhood where she lives and the fancy suburban prep school she attends. The uneasy balance between these worlds is shattered when Starr witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend Khalil at the hands of a police officer. Khalil was unarmed.

Soon afterward, his death is a national headline. Some are calling him a thug, maybe even a drug dealer and a gangbanger. Protesters are taking to the streets in Khalil’s name. Some cops and the local drug lord try to intimidate Starr and her family. What everyone wants to know is: what really went down that night? And the only person alive who can answer that is Starr.

But what Starr does—or does not—say could upend her community. It could also endanger her life.

*Eleanor and Park* by Rainbow Rowell
Set in 1986, Eleanor & Park is funny and sad, sarcastic and sincere, and above all geeky. The title characters are both 16-year-old misfits in their working-class Omaha neighborhood. Park is half-Korean in a mostly-white part of town, and is into alternative music and comic books, unlike his brother and dad who are into sports. Eleanor is big (she thinks of herself as fat) and awkward and poor, the oldest of five kids with a painfully difficult home life, and defiantly flaunts her crazy red hair and weird clothes.

They find themselves sitting together on the school bus every day. Over time they’re reluctantly drawn together by sharing Park’s X-Men and Watchmen comic books. Despite their friends’ derision and their families’ dismay and disapproval, they fall in love over mix tapes featuring The Cure and the Smiths. A larger, more dangerous threat looms over one of them, skillfully woven throughout the story and coming to a climax in a way that will have you reading faster and faster to find out what happens. Amazon review.

***The Hundred Secret Senses*** by Amy Tan
Set in San Francisco and in a remote village of Southwestern China, Amy Tan’s *The Hundred Secret Senses* is a tale of American assumptions shaken by Chinese ghosts and broadened with hope. In 1962, five-year-old Olivia meets the half-sister she never knew existed, eighteen-year-old Kwan from China, who sees ghosts with her “yin eyes.” Decades later, Olivia describes her complicated relationship with her sister and her failing marriage, as Kwan reveals her story, sweeping the reader into the splendor and violence of mid-nineteenth century China. With her characteristic wisdom, grace, and humor, Tan conjures up a story of the inheritance of love, its secrets and senses, its illusions and truths.

*Aristotle and Dante Solve the Problems of the Universe* by Benjamin Alire Sáenz
Aristotle is an angry teen with a brother in prison. Dante is a know-it-all who has an unusual way of looking at the world. When the two meet at the swimming pool, they seem to have nothing in common. But as the loners start spending time together, they discover that they share a special friendship—the kind that changes lives and lasts a lifetime. It is through this friendship that Ari
and Dante will learn the most important truths about themselves and the kind of people they want to be. Rated among the best of Gay/Lesbian Fiction.

*The Five People you Meet in Heaven* by Mitch Albom
A bitter eighty-three-year-old war veteran, who believes his life is meaningless, dies while trying to save a little girl's life and finds himself in heaven, where five people from his past--some loved ones, some strangers--explain what his years on Earth really meant, and whether or not he succeeded in saving the child.

**A Lesson Before Dying** by Ernest Gaines
This book tells the story of a young African-American man sentenced to death for a murder he did not commit, and a teacher who tries to impart to him his learning and pride before the execution.

**Into the Wild** by Jon Krakauer: Krakauer retraces the steps of a 23-year-old young man who renounces his possessions and heads into the Alaska wild, where he is destroyed by nature and his own bad choices. (Amazon review)

**Cat's Cradle** by Kurt Vonnegut: This entertaining novel, in pure Vonnegut style, is filled with scientists, G-men, and even ordinary folks caught up in chasing each other around in search of the world's most important and dangerous new substance, a new form of ice that freezes at room temperature. (Amazon review)

**Timeline** by Michael Crichton
In an Arizona desert a man wanders in a daze, speaking words that make no sense. Within twenty-four hours he is dead, his body swiftly cremated by his only known associates. Halfway around the world archaeologists make a shocking discovery at a medieval site. Suddenly they are swept off to the headquarters of a secretive multinational corporation that has developed an astounding technology. Now this group is about to get a chance not to study the past but to enter it. And with history opened to the present, the dead awakened to the living, these men and women will soon find themselves fighting for their very survival--six hundred years ago. . . . (Amazon review)