

# JUNIOR BOOK TALK

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Please RANK your top 3 choices (3-2-1) and hand this packet back to your mentor.**

**→ Next week during third block you will be called down to the Cafeteria to get their book, assignment and to sign a contract.**

## I Am Malala by Malala Yousafzai

Explanation: *I Am Malala* is the remarkable tale of a family uprooted by global terrorism, of the fight for girls' education, of a father who, himself a school owner, championed and encouraged his daughter to write and attend school, and of brave parents who have a fierce love for their daughter in a society that prizes sons.

## COMPLICATIONS: A Surgeon's Notes On An Imperfect Science by Atul Gawande

Explanation: In gripping accounts of true cases, surgeon Atul Gawande explores the power and the limits of medicine, offering an unflinching view from the scalpel's edge. *Complications* lays bare a science not in its idealized form but as it actually is—uncertain, perplexing, and profoundly human.

NOTE: Can be graphic in description of medical conditions

## THE GLASS CASTLE by Jeannette Walls

Explanation: This is a memoir about the author's nomadic upbringing and dysfunctional family dynamic. What is so astonishing about Jeannette Walls is not just that she had the guts and tenacity and intelligence to get out, but that she describes her parents with such deep affection and generosity. Hers is a story of triumph against all odds, but also a tender, moving tale of unconditional love in a family that despite its profound flaws gave her the fiery determination to carve out a successful life on her own terms.

## THE BONESETTER'S DAUGHTER by Amy Tan

Explanation: This book deals with the relationship between an American-born Chinese woman and her immigrant mother. It is divided into two major stories. The first is about Ruth, a Chinese-American woman living in San Francisco. She worries that her elderly mother, Lu Ling, is gradually becoming more and more demented. Lu Ling seems increasingly forgetful, and makes bizarre comments about her family and her own past. The second major story is that of Lu Ling herself, as written for Ruth. Several years earlier, Lu Ling had written out her life story in Chinese. Ruth arranges to have the document translated, and learns the truth about her mother's life in China.

## THE HANDMAID'S TALE by Margaret Atwood

Explanation: In the world of the near future, who will control women's bodies?

Offred is a Handmaid in the Republic of Gilead. She may leave the home of the Commander and his wife once a day to walk to food markets whose signs are now pictures instead of words because women are no longer allowed to read. She must lie on her back once a month and pray that the Commander makes her pregnant, because in an age of declining births, Offred and the other Handmaids are only valued if their ovaries are viable.

## I KNOW WHY THE CAGED BIRD SINGS by Maya Angelou

Explanation: This is the autobiography about the early years of African-American writer and poet Maya Angelou. The first in a seven-volume series, it is a coming-of-age story that illustrates how strength of character and a love of literature can help overcome racism and trauma. Angelou uses her autobiography to explore subjects such as identity, rape, racism, and literacy. The book begins when three-year-old Maya and her older brother are sent to Stamps, Arkansas, to live with their grandmother and ends when Maya becomes a mother at the age of 16. In the course of *Caged Bird*, Maya transforms from a victim of racism with an inferiority complex into a self-possessed, dignified young woman capable of responding to prejudice.

### **Qaddafi's Point Guard by Alex Owumi**

Explanation: A Nigerian native who emigrated to the United States at age 11, Alex Owumi's exploits on the basketball court led him to a successful career as a small college player. Undrafted by the NBA, Owumi pursued his pro basketball dream overseas, eventually signing with Al-Nasr of Libya, a state-run athletic club privately funded by the family of then-Libyan president Muammar Qaddafi.

### **THE HOT ZONE by Richard Preston**

Explanation: This is a non-fiction thriller about the origins and incidents involving viral hemorrhagic fevers, particularly Ebola viruses. The basis of the book was Preston's 1992 *New Yorker* article "Crisis in the Hot Zone". Horror writer Stephen King called the book, "one of the most horrifying things I've ever read." Due to the detailed and graphic descriptions of the effects of exotic tropical diseases, as well as the revelation that an Ebola virus was found a few miles away from Washington D.C., *The Hot Zone* was hailed by many as a chilling and accurate story of lethal viruses and their encounters with humans.

### **NICKeLED AND DIMED by Barbara Ehrenreich**

Explanation: Written from the author's perspective as an undercover journalist, it sets out to investigate the impact of the 1996 welfare reform act on the working poor in the United States. The events related in the book took place between spring 1998 and summer 2000. Ehrenreich investigates many of the difficulties low wage workers face, including the hidden costs involved in such necessities as shelter and food. Also, she attacks the notion that low-wage jobs require unskilled labor.

### **WINTERGIRLS by Laurie Halse Anderson**

Explanation: This is a young adult novel by Laurie Halse Anderson. It follows the story of Lia, an eighteen-year-old girl dealing with anorexia nervosa. The novel opens with the news that Lia's best friend of 10 years, Cassie, who was bulimic, has died, and the night she died, she tried to call Lia 33 times. The novel follows the course of Lia struggles with anorexia, her difficult relationships with her parents and stepmother, and her search to learn about Cassie's fate.

### **LIFE AS WE KNOW IT by Susan Beth Pfeffer**

Explanation: Told in a year's worth of journal entries, this heart-pounding story chronicles Miranda's struggle to hold on to the most important resource of all—hope—in an increasingly desperate and unfamiliar world. This is part of a series.

### **THE STREET by Ann Petry**

Explanation: THE STREET tells the poignant, often heartbreaking story of Lutie Johnson, a young black woman, and her spirited struggle to raise her son amid the violence, poverty, and racial dissonance of Harlem in the late 1940s.

### **PERKS OF BEING A WALLFLOWER by Stephen Chbosky**

Explanation: This novel follows observant "wallflower" Charlie as he charts a course through the strange world between adolescence and adulthood. First dates, family drama, and new friends. Sex, drugs, and *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. Devastating loss, young love, and life on the fringes. Caught between trying to live his life and trying to run from it, Charlie must learn to navigate those wild and poignant roller-coaster days known as growing up.

### **THE MEMORY KEEPER'S DAUGHTER by Kim Edwards**

Explanation: A family drama, *The Memory Keeper's Daughter* explores every mother's silent fear: What would happen if you lost your child and she grew up without you? It is also an astonishing tale of love and how the mysterious ties that hold a family together help us survive the heartache that occurs when long-buried secrets are finally uncovered.