Dear Senior,

Please look over the list of memoirs and choose your book carefully. We’ve given you a lot of different choices so you can find a book that interests you. Some are written by famous historical figures, while others are more modern. Some have been on the best-seller list. The purpose is to help you see models of good narrative writing before we write our narratives in the fall (the reflective essay). Due to the variety of topics and because the genre of memoir is highly personal, please understand that some of the books contain mature themes and topics and some have graphic scenes. Please research the books before you choose and know that if you begin a book that you don’t like, you can always select a different one from the list. If you have any questions or concerns, please email Nichole Schwartz at nichole.schwartz@boone.kyschools.us.

Sincerely,

Senior Teachers

Choose one of the following memoirs. Read the memoir and keep a HANDWRITTEN journal that includes 10 separate entries. THIS JOURNAL MUST NOT BE TYPED. These journals can simply be on paper; they do not need to be in a bound notebook. For each entry, choose a meaningful passage from the book (about a paragraph or two). Rewrite that passage and give the page number. Then, below that passage from the memoir, write a response/reaction to the passage. Each response to the passage needs to be in the form of a thoughtful paragraph (or a little longer). In your response, you could address such questions as

- What did you notice?
- What struck you?
- How can other people relate to this quotation?
- Reflect on the author’s storytelling ability.
- How did the author capture your attention?
- What deeper insight into the book as a whole does this passage provide?
- How is this passage different from previous passages that you’ve read?

These 10 entries are due the first day of school. We will have an essay test during the first week.
Your Options (Note: the summaries are from www.goodreads.com)

**I Am Malala** - Malala Yousafzai

*I come from a country that was created at midnight. When I almost died it was just after midday.*

When the Taliban took control of the Swat Valley in Pakistan, one girl spoke out. Malala Yousafzai refused to be silenced and fought for her right to an education. On Tuesday, October 9, 2012, when she was fifteen, she almost paid the ultimate price. She was shot in the head at point-blank range while riding the bus home from school, and few expected her to survive. Instead, Malala’s miraculous recovery has taken her on an extraordinary journey from a remote valley in northern Pakistan to the halls of the United Nations in New York. At sixteen, she has become a global symbol of peaceful protest and the youngest nominee ever for the Nobel Peace Prize.

*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. *I Am Malala* will make you believe in the power of one person's voice to inspire change in the world.

**EDUCATED** – Tara Westover

*Tara Westover was 17 the first time she set foot in a classroom. Born to survivalists in the mountains of Idaho, she prepared for the end of the world by stockpiling home-canned peaches and sleeping with her "head-for-the-hills bag". In the summer she stewed herbs for her mother, a midwife and healer, and in the winter she salvaged in her father's junkyard.*

Her father forbade hospitals, so Tara never saw a doctor or nurse. Gashes and concussions, even burns from explosions, were all treated at home with herbalism. The family was so isolated from mainstream society that there was no one to ensure the children received an education and no one to intervene when one of Tara’s older brothers became violent.

Then, lacking any formal education, Tara began to educate herself. She taught herself enough mathematics and grammar to be admitted to Brigham Young University, where she studied history, learning for the first time about important world events like the Holocaust and the civil rights movement. Her quest for knowledge transformed her, taking her over oceans and across continents, to Harvard and to Cambridge. Only then would she wonder if she'd traveled too far, if there was still a way home.

**Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis – JD Vance**

*From a former marine and Yale Law School graduate, a powerful account of growing up in a poor Rust Belt town that offers a broader, probing look at the struggles of America’s white working class.*

Hillbilly Elegy is a passionate and personal analysis of a culture in crisis—that of white working-class Americans. The decline of this group, a demographic of our country that has been slowly disintegrating over forty years, has been reported on with growing frequency and alarm, but has
never before been written about as searingly from the inside. J. D. Vance tells the true story of what a social, regional, and class decline feels like when you were born with it hung around your neck.

When Breath Becomes Air – Paul Kalanithi

At the age of thirty-six, on the verge of completing a decade’s worth of training as a neurosurgeon, Paul Kalanithi was diagnosed with stage IV lung cancer. One day he was a doctor treating the dying, and the next he was a patient struggling to live. And just like that, the future he and his wife had imagined evaporated. When Breath Becomes Air chronicles Kalanithi’s transformation from a naïve medical student “possessed,” as he wrote, “by the question of what, given that all organisms die, makes a virtuous and meaningful life” into a neurosurgeon at Stanford working in the brain, the most critical place for human identity, and finally into a patient and new father confronting his own mortality.

What makes life worth living in the face of death? What do you do when the future, no longer a ladder toward your goals in life, flattens out into a perpetual present? What does it mean to have a child, to nurture a new life as another fades away? These are some of the questions Kalanithi wrestles with in this profoundly moving, exquisitely observed memoir.

Switched On: A Memoir of Brain Change and Emotional Awakening – John Elder Robison

Imagine spending the first forty years of your life in darkness, blind to the emotions and social signals of other people. Then imagine that someone suddenly switches the lights on.

It has long been assumed that people living with autism are born with the diminished ability to read the emotions of others, even as they feel emotion deeply. But what if we’ve been wrong all this time? What if that “missing” emotional insight was there all along, locked away and inaccessible in the mind?

In 2007 John Elder Robison wrote the international bestseller Look Me in the Eye, a memoir about growing up with Asperger’s syndrome. Amid the blaze of publicity that followed, he received a unique invitation: Would John like to take part in a study led by one of the world’s foremost neuroscientists, who would use an experimental new brain therapy known as TMS, or transcranial magnetic stimulation, in an effort to understand and then address the issues at the heart of autism? Switched On is the extraordinary story of what happened next.

Autobiography of Malcolm X – Malcolm X

If there was any one man who articulated the anger, the struggle, and the beliefs of African Americans in the 1960s, that man was Malcolm X. His AUTOBIOGRAPHY is now an established classic of modern America, a book that expresses like none other the crucial truth about our times.

"Extraordinary. A brilliant, painful, important book."

The Audacity of Hope-Barack Obama

The Audacity of Hope is Barack Obama's call for a new kind of politics—a politics that builds upon those shared understandings that pull us together as Americans. Lucid in his vision of
America's place in the world, refreshingly candid about his family life and his time in the Senate, Obama here sets out his political convictions and inspires us to trust in the dogged optimism that has long defined us and that is our best hope going forward.


Every Thursday morning for two years in the Islamic Republic of Iran, a bold and inspired teacher named Azar Nafisi secretly gathered seven of her most committed female students to read forbidden Western classics. As Islamic morality squads staged arbitrary raids in Tehran, fundamentalists seized hold of the universities, and a blind censor stifled artistic expression, the girls in Azar Nafisi's living room risked removing their veils and immersed themselves in the worlds of Jane Austen, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Henry James, and Vladimir Nabokov. In this extraordinary memoir, their stories become intertwined with the ones they are reading. Reading Lolita in Tehran is a remarkable exploration of resilience in the face of tyranny and a celebration of the liberating power of literature.

**The Liars’ Club - Mary Karr**

When it was published in 1995, Mary Karr's The Liars Club took the world by storm and raised the art of the memoir to an entirely new level, as well as bringing about a dramatic revival of the form. Karr's comic childhood in an east Texas oil town brings us characters as darkly hilarious as any of J. D. Salinger's—a hard-drinking daddy, a sister who can talk down the sheriff at twelve, and an oft-married mother whose accumulated secrets threaten to destroy them all. Now with a new introduction that discusses her memoir's impact on her family, this unsentimental and profoundly moving account of an apocalyptic childhood is as "funny, lively, and un-put-downable" (USA Today) today as it ever was.

**The Motorcycle Diaries – Che Guevara**

The young Che Guevara’s lively and highly entertaining travel diary is now a New York Times bestseller. This new, expanded edition features exclusive, unpublished photos taken by the 23-year-old Ernesto on his journey across a continent, and a tender preface by Aleida Guevara, offering an insightful perspective on the man and the icon.

“A journey, a number of journeys. Ernesto Guevara in search of adventure, Ernesto Guevara in search of America, Ernesto Guevara in search of Che. On this journey of journeys, solitude found solidarity, ’I’ turned into ‘we’.” —Eduardo Galeano

**Dust Tracks on a Road – Zora Neale Hurston**

First published in 1942 at the height of her popularity, Dust Tracks on a Road is Zora Neale Hurston's candid, funny, bold, and poignant autobiography, an imaginative and exuberant account of her rise from childhood poverty in the rural South to a prominent place among the leading artists and intellectuals of the Harlem Renaissance. As compelling as her acclaimed fiction, Hurston's very personal literary self-portrait offers a revealing, often audacious glimpse into the life -- public and private -- of an extraordinary artist, anthropologist, chronicler, and champion of the black experience in America. Full of the wit and wisdom of a proud, spirited woman who started off low and climbed high, Dust Tracks on a Road is a rare treasure from one of literature's most cherished voices.