**Requirements:** Each student enrolled in **English 9** must read one of the following books. Students enrolled in **English 9 Honors** must read two. Students enrolled in **non-Honors English 9** next year, can also consult the FCPS summer reading list ([http://www.fcps.edu/is/summer/reading/912.shtml](http://www.fcps.edu/is/summer/reading/912.shtml)). Students can purchase books or visit local libraries to attain copies of the books.

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<th><strong>Touching Spirit Bear</strong> by Ben Mikaelsen</th>
<th>Difficulty index: 2 out of 3 stars</th>
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**From the back of the book:** “Within Cole Matthews lie anger, rage, and hate. Cole has been stealing and fighting for years. This time he caught Peter Driscal in the parking lot and smashed his head against the sidewalk. Now, Peter may have permanent brain damage – and Cole is in the biggest trouble of his life.” As the book unfolds, Cole is banished to a wild, Alaskan island as his punishment. If you liked **Hatchet**, you’ll really like this book.

**First paragraph:** “Cole Matthews knelt defiantly in the bow of the aluminum skiff as he faced forward into a cold September wind. Worn steel handcuffs bit at his wrists each time the small craft slapped into another wave. Overhead, a gray-matted sky hung like a bad omen. Cole strained at the cuffs even though he had agreed to wear them until he was freed on the island to begin his banishment. Agreeing to spend a whole year in Southeast Alaska had been his only way of avoiding a jail cell in Minneapolis.”

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<th><strong>Speak</strong> by Laurie Halse Anderson</th>
<th>Difficulty index: 2 out of 3 stars</th>
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**From Barnes & Noble review:** When Melinda Sordino's friends discover she called the police to quiet a party, they ostracize her, turning her into an outcast -- even among kids she barely knows. But even worse than the harsh conformity of high-school cliques is a secret that you have to hide.—bn.com

**First page:** It is my first morning of high school. I have seven new notebooks, a skirt I hate, and a stomachache.

The school bus wheezes to my corner. The door opens and I step up. I am the first pickup of the day. The driver pulls away from while I stand in the aisle. Where to sit? I’ve never been a backseat waste case. If I sit in the middle, a stranger could sit next to me. If I sit in the front, it will make me look like a little kid, but I figure it’s the best chance I have to make eye contact with one of my friends, if any of them have decided to talk to me yet.
**Brief Summary:** Steve is a 16 year old, African-American boy on trial for murder. The story eventually reveals whether or not he is guilty, but along the way the reader sees what it is like for Steve to live in a juvenile detention center. The book is written as a screen play so reading it feels like reading a television show!

**First page:** FADE IN: INTERIOR: Early morning in CELL BLOCK D, MANHATTAN DETENTION CENTER.

Steve (Voice-Over)
Sometimes I feel like I have walked into the middle of a movie. Maybe I can make my own movie. The film will be the story of my life. No, not my life, but of this experience. I'll call it what the lady prosecutor called me ... **Monster.**

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**Feed by M.T. Anderson**  
Difficulty index: 3 out of 3 stars

This book is not a difficult read, but it will cause you to do some interesting thinking about how technology might impact our future world. In the book, every brain is implanted with a constant stream of information. School is not about learning facts, but about learning how to use that constant flow of information.

*From Amazon.com review:* “Identity crises, consumerism, and star-crossed teenage love in a futuristic society where people connect to the Internet via feeds implanted in their brains.

For Titus and his friends, it started out like any ordinary trip to the moon - a chance to party during spring break and play with some stupid low-grav at the Ricochet Lounge. But that was before the crazy hacker caused all their feeds to malfunction, sending them to the hospital to lie around with nothing inside their heads for days. And it was before Titus met Violet, a beautiful, brainy teenage girl who has decided to fight the feed and its omnipresent ability to categorize human thoughts and desires.”  
**WARNING:** There are some bad words in this book.

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**Slam! by Walter Dean Meyers**  
Difficulty index 1 out of 3 stars

**Brief Summary:** Slam is the name of a seventeen year old point guard who struggles with his grades, the expectations of the adults in his life, and life in a neighborhood filled with the temptations of selling or using drugs. Slam finds escape and life lessons by playing basketball in a racially diverse school that stresses academic success.

**First page:** “Basketball is my thing. I can hoop. Case closed. I’m six four and I got the moves, the eye, and the heart. You can take my game to the bank and wait around for the interest. With me it’s not like playing a game, it’s like the only time I’m being for real. Bringing the ball down the court makes me feel like a bird that just learned to fly....”
The Alchemist by Paolo Coehlo

**Brief Summary:** (from Amazon.com) This story, dazzling in its powerful simplicity and inspiring wisdom, is about an Andalusian shepherd boy named Santiago who travels from his homeland in Spain to the Egyptian desert in search of a treasure buried in the Pyramids. Along the way he meets a Gypsy woman, a man who calls himself king, and an alchemist, all of whom point Santiago in the direction of his quest. No one knows what the treasure is, or if Santiago will be able to surmount the obstacles along the way. But what starts out as a journey to find worldly goods turns into a discovery of the treasures found within. Lush, evocative, and deeply humane, the story of Santiago is an eternal testament to the transforming power of our dreams and the importance of listening to our hearts.

**First page:** “The boy’s name was Santiago. Dusk was falling as the boy arrived with his herd at an abandoned church. The roof had fallen in long ago, and an enormous sycamore had grown on the spot where the sacristy had once stood.

He decided to spend the night there. He saw to it that all the sheep entered through the ruined gate, and then laid some planks across it to prevent the flock from wandering away during the night. There were no wolves in the region, but once an animal had strayed during the night, and the boy had had to spend the entire next day searching for it.”